THE DREAM CHILD

By FLORENCE HUNTLEY

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Author of
"Harmonics of Evolution"
and "The Gay Gnani of Gingalee"

Eleventh Edition

The Author of "The Dream Child."
FLORENCE HUNTLEY
From a photograph taken for the
first edition.

1915
Indo-American Book Company
5705 So. Boulevard
Chicago

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Dedicated *To all Seekers After TRUTH*

The Dream Child

"Love is the fulfilling of the Law." Romans XIII, 10.

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Preface to the Ninth Edition.

From its first publication to the present, "*The Dream Child*" has had two classes of readers, each undoubtedly honest and ardent in its judgments.

The first and larger class are its Friends, those who have been able to read and receive a fundamental Truth through the medium of fiction; and second, its Critics, who have held these fictitious characters (and the author) to their own limited understanding of Nature's Laws and of the unseen impulses and passions that are forever shaping these tragedies and comedies of human life in general, and of human marriage in particular.

The Author's error in presenting "*The Dream Child*" originally, was in leaving too much to the average reader's powers of intuition, perception and comparison. Those who have read between the lines of this story have not needed the "*Belated Chapter*", "*A Retrospect*", which is now published for the

first time and which was left out of all preceding editions as superfluous. These friends of "*The Dream Child*" will not need this addition to the story in their search for the causes that worked out tragedy and sorrow in the lives of every actor in this drama.

This long unpublished chapter is a bit of history properly due my critics, and which may in some measure soften and illuminate their judgment of this little romance of two worlds.

—*Florence Huntley.*

Chicago, February, 1911.

The Dream Child.

CHAPTER I.

DOCTORS AGREE.

"IN the twenty-five years of my study and practice," said the Doctor, "I have never encountered so fascinating a problem."

It was while we were passing through the last ladies' ward that my attention had been particularly drawn to a patient, a woman, standing at the window of a charming private apartment, and it was my abrupt inquiry concerning her that had called out the very emphatic statement of the doctor.

Doctor Fred Haynes was my oldest and closest personal friend; we had been college chums and co-workers during our medical course, and this enduring friendship was a green spot in the lives of two elderly, hard-

working men. While Fred had chosen to remain in the East and narrow his practice in the direction of his inclination, I, more venturesome, had drifted west, and even in the great city, had built up a considerable practice, and somewhat of a reputation as a specialist in certain chronic diseases.

The rare visits which my old friend and myself still contrived to pay each other between New York and Chicago, were events of great enjoyment to each, and were invariably spiced with professional discussion and animated debate over the latest expositions and theories pertaining to *materia medica*.

At the time of which I speak, November, 1889, a convention of medical and scientific gentlemen, held in New York, had given me a capital excuse for granting myself a much needed vacation. Doctor Haynes, a bachelor like myself, was now superintendent of a private hospital for insane, and was devoting his life to the scientific application of his own theories as to the cause and treatment of insanity.

Peculiar and aggravated disorders were his delight, and whatever afforded experi-

ment for preconceived theories or furnished data for new ones, was welcomed to this model institution. The hospital, having been planned and equipped entirely under his supervision, was a well conducted house, and much less resembled a lunatic asylum than a well kept private hotel. When the convention had finally adjourned, I accepted Fred's urgent invitation, became a guest of the hospital, and dismissed for a few days all thought of the home practice.

The first evening of my stay was largely given over to personal reminiscences and mutual accountings of the years intervening since we had met. The next morning, however, falling naturally into the professional habit, I accompanied the doctor on his rounds through the luxuriously furnished wards, and gave myself up to his enthusiastic discussion of his pet hobby, and to professional observation.

I noticed with interest that there was but one strong room, one barred and grated cell: nor were there any ponderous swinging doors or grated gates dividing long, bare corridors, such as rendered the old

time asylum hideous. In fact there was none of that stifling prison atmosphere, even yet too common in so-called hospitals for the insane. I was also favorably impressed with the number and the intelligent bearing of the attendants, and congratulated Fred upon at least the exterior excellence of his system.

"This is a hospital, not a prison," he rejoined, earnestly. "Insane people are sick people, nervous to hysteria, and not only does human reason but animal instinct rebels and chafes under harsh restraint. Bolts and bars are for the most part barbarisms, and straight jackets and cribs have no place in modern medical practice.

My assistants and attendants, you see here, are men and women, all of whom have the rudiments of a medical education, each one being a trained nurse, devoted to his or her calling."

I nodded approval, as Fred continued with warmth, "Kindness, vigilance and self-control, and rational treatment for irrational beings, are the only bolts and bars employed in this institution."

It was just here that I observed the distinguished looking woman at the window and had stopped abruptly that I might satisfy my curiosity.

"Let me introduce you," the doctor continued, and retracing his steps toward the open door of the lady's room, he rapped gently, attracting her attention, receiving a low, ready invitation to enter. He did so, signaling me to follow, and immediately presented me as a brother physician and old time friend.

Glancing at the face of the woman, I bowed involuntarily, acknowledging the introduction with the same gravity I would have observed in any drawing room.

The classic profile which had so attracted me, as it cut a distinct silhouette against the light of the window, suffered nothing under closer inspection.

The lady, Mrs. Varien by name, performed her part of the ceremony with the utmost ease and well bred courtesy. "Ah," she said, and smiled: a shadowy smile that did not reach the eyes. "Can this be Dr. Doran, of Chicago, of whom I have heard

so much? This surely was the name of Judge Garrett's family physician, a skilful surgeon who saved Mrs. Garrett's life after she had been pronounced incurable by several gentlemen of another school."

Unprepared for the conventional and easy address of this mad woman, I confess that even professional stolidity was considerably taxed. I was unprepared for such calmness and dignity or to find in this place a friend of my intimate friends at home. With as much ease of manner as I could summon, I acknowledged myself the physician in question and inquired further of her acquaintance with the Garretts.

"Mrs. Garrett," explained the lady, "or rather Miss Richland of Chicago, was a school-mate of mine in a New York seminary, but after her return home and her marriage to the now famous railway attorney, we gradually lost trace of each other. Four years ago, our friendship was most delightfully renewed by a chance meeting abroad. It was then she told me of her dangerous illness and almost miraculous cure."

The way now open to familiar conversa-

tion, I accepted the seat indicated by the patient, who, as if physically weary, sank, half-reclining upon the couch from which she had probably risen but a moment before our entrance.

The doctor, seeing that I was interested, excused himself a moment on the plea of finishing his round. "I will leave you to your mutual acquaintances, but I warn you, Mrs. Varien," he added playfully, "not to allow the conversation to drift into the nature and constitution of bascilli. This is Doctor Doran's only weakness and hobby."

The lady smiled, rather it was the shadow of a smile that touched her pale face; while I assented very willingly to Fred's suggestions and turning again to my new acquaintance, eagerly renewed the conversation.

What was this mad woman like? That were difficult for any man to put into language, especially an elderly one, used rather to the diagnosis of disease than of feminine beauty. She was one of those indescribable women of uncertain years, whose charm of personality far outruns the narrow limit of physical perfection. She was of

medium height, slight to meagerness, yet with a girlish willowy grace in every movement. She was neither dark nor fair, and her face, delicately oval and exceedingly pale, held one's attention as would some carved or painted one of classic mold. Her eyes, large clear hazel, and soft as those of a deer, were fascinating, magnificent. They were shaded by long lashes and overshadowed by straight black brows: such eyes are exceedingly uncommon, and once seen are never forgotten. But for her thinness and extreme pallor, Mrs. Varien might have been regarded as a very beautiful woman. Her voice, that sure test of both culture and feeling, was as soft and sweet as it was low and distinct. The high bred and gentle repose of her manner, the plaintive ring in her voice and the changing lights and shadows of those wonderful eyes grew upon me each instant.

Meanwhile, this woman, whose presence here marked her as among the unfortunate of earth, continued to talk on easily, rationally, yet languidly, of places, people and events, with an appreciation of nature,

character and condition, that astounded me. Her dignity of manner was no less remarkable than her continuity of thought and elegance of expression. Time passed so rapidly in her company that I was incredulous when the doctor, on his return, apologized for his half hour absence.

"Twenty-five minutes more of bascilli than Mrs. Varien wanted, I'll warrant," and laughing over his favorite joke, we prepared to take leave.

"I'm exceedingly obliged for the delay," said Mrs. Varien as she arose.

I was again reminded of a statue, rather than of a woman of flesh and blood. The soft white draperies of this pale creature's gown fell into artistic lines and folds, and settled about her motionless figure after the fashion of garments chiseled from marble.

"Your visit has been a pleasure," she continued, "I have been so long among strangers that all Americans are old acquaintances, then reckoning upon our mutual friends, in Chicago, Doctor Doran and I could almost call ourselves such, now "Do you remain long?" turning to me.

"But a day or two, madam," I replied, "but during which time, if it will not tax your strength, I would very much like to meet you again."

She smiled at this, a peculiar sort of smile. "It does not tire me," she said, "nor make me nervous to see people," and holding out her hand, in a gently cordial fashion, she thus emphasized the sincerity of her invitation.

I could scarcely restrain my impatience until Fred and I were quite beyond hearing, demanding at once what "this thing meant."

"What thing?" returned the doctor, provokingly.

"Why, Fred, that woman is no more insane than I am."

"Think not?"

"No, and by Jove, not in half as much danger as you are. I say, old fellow," and I turned anxiously, looking him squarely in the face: "I say Fred, this insane work is not proving too much for you, is it? I have read frequently of the best minds giving way under the strain of this life among

lunatics. You haven't succumbed to this tainted atmosphere? Surely you are not flying off yourself, and shutting up level headed people, meanwhile?"

The ringing boyish laugh that answered my absurd speech, was of the tone and quality that insane people can neither preserve nor imitate.

"You forget," he said, finally, the twinkle still lingering in his eye, "that I had but mentioned this as an abnormal case, but I did not add at the same time, the most pathetic and hopeless I have ever known. I am singularly pleased with this timely visit, for all along I have had you in mind, wishing for your assistance in the solution of this problem. Frankly, Davy," unconsciously dropping into the school-boy tone; "what would you have said of this woman had you met her anywhere on earth except in an insane asylum?"

I replied without hesitation, "Had I met this Mrs. Varien elsewhere than under these conditions, and without previous warning, or proper examination, I would have declared her, first, to be a remarkably hand-

some woman, also a thoroughly cultured one, and lastly and chiefly a most unhappy one. I would have reckoned her a woman of unusual power of mind, and a thoughtful reader and an observant traveler. She is certainly a woman of fine sensibilities, fitted rather, I should say, for the quiet enjoyments of home than the triumphs of social life. There are traces of both physical weakness and mental disquiet in her wasted body and colorless face, but in her easy bearing, her intelligent conversation, and in her even glances and steady tones, I detect neither melancholia nor any of the phases of hysteria. That woman may have suffered much, thought deeply, or have given her life over to some secret anxiety or unrest, but I tell you she is no more insane than you or myself."

"Good," exclaimed the doctor, "and now," he continued, "we'll have lunch, and while we smoke I will entertain you with a recital of her case. You will be interested, sufficiently I trust, to remain over for a week. I feel bound to talk over with some one this most extraordinary disease

that has effectually broken up a home, ruined the promising early career of a noble man, and utterly wrecked the life of a beautiful and gifted woman."

Crusty bachelor that I am, I have not yet outlived the pleasure of a romantic tale; and especially when it comes adorned with legitimate professional trappings, is the interest twofold.

"Go on," I urged, even before we had lighted our cigars. "I am all interest," and Fred, squaring himself comfortably toward the open grate fire, as eagerly dipped into his theme.

"It was nearly two months ago," said the doctor, "that I was one day surprised by a call from Frank Varien, an old Philadelphia friend. I had not seen him for years, and was therefore considerably astonished when he presented his wife's case and asked that she be admitted as a patient to the hospital."

Continued the doctor: "I first met Varien over twenty years ago, and there sprang up between us a sudden and cordial friendship. I was present at his marriage to Dian Williston, then a charming girl of but seventeen.

She was wholly inexperienced, an orphan of great wealth, but, as I had reason to know, a singularly pure-minded and innocent girl. Varien himself comes of an old and aristocratic family, is heir to a million, and occupies a position socially pre-eminent. When I first knew him there was current in society a report of his engagement to a Miss Alice Huntington, a leading society belle, but as this was soon followed by the announcement of his engagement to her cousin, Miss Williston, I with the rest of the world concluded the rumor must have been groundless.

I never met Miss Huntington, but recalled her name when mentioned at Varien's wedding. It was the bride herself who was explaining regretfully that her cousin Alice was not well, had been taken by her father on a short sea voyage, and so must let some one else take her place as maid of honor. After their marriage I became a frequent visitor at their delightful home, and was called in at the birth of their first and only child. It was a daughter, and was named Stella by its mother, who had a liking for

fanciful names. The meaning of Stella is, I believe, a star.

When the child was but a few months old the Variens moved permanently from New York to his father's home in Philadelphia, and as so frequently happens in this busy world I quite lost direct trace of these valued friends.

In a general way, however, through mutual acquaintances and occasional newspaper personals, I learned indefinitely that Varien had abandoned his career as a lawyer, that his wife was somewhat of an invalid, and later on, that they had gone abroad and were quite lost to their old gay world in Philadelphia.

After so long a separation and silence," continued the doctor, "it was a little singular, but extremely gratifying to me, that my old friend should have remembered me in the hour of his extremity, or that his wife should herself elect to come under my care.

Our early friendship, however, and my knowledge of the child, and association with her death, were the reason for this selection,

rather than any reputation I may have since gained in the line of my profession.

Varien had come to me directly upon their landing in New York, and after listening carefully to his story, I became even more anxious than himself to secure his wife as a patient, and advised that she be brought to the hospital immediately; and, Davy," continued my old chum, slowly tapping the ashes from his cigar, "I frankly admit that I'm completely staggered by this woman's case. I want your best medical opinion — I need it, but in order to secure it, it will be necessary to repeat the story just as it came from Varien himself, the unfortunate husband of a most unfortunate woman."

Chapter II.

SHE DREAMED A DREAM.

"Dian's love for this beautiful child was little short of idolatry."

"A you know," began Varien sadly, "I married a lovable, light-hearted girl: you know of our early devotion, nor can you have forgotten our rapture when the little one came, our [illegible], star of [illegible], as Dian herself named the child.

After our removal to my father's house in Philadelphia, we lived of course as became his wealth and name: we entertained largely, and my girlish wife became a real society queen, among whose followers was none more devoted than myself.

For a year and a half after the birth of the child my life was absolutely happy.

We were both bound up in the little one. She was the light of our eyes, and we lived in the first mad dawnings of intelligence and we hung entranced upon her foolish baby

CHAPTER II.

SHE DREAMED A DREAM.

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lispings and halting efforts at speech. Dian's love for this beautiful child was little short of idolatry. At times I even felt neglected, and had I not vigorously protested she would have sacrificed society in her blind devotion to this angel of the household.

It was when Stella was but a year and a half old that disaster came, and as is so common in these overwhelming calamities, it came unheralded. One morning, the nurse, ordinarily a most careful person, having some errand below stairs, left the child alone in the nursery on the third floor. Both my wife and myself were out, and neither of the maids heard the little one's screams until too late. When or how she obtained the match that did such terrible work no one will ever know, but it was enough that on her return to her charge, the nurse was horrified to hear scream after scream of terror from the baby she had left quietly playing with her blocks and toys.

Paralyzed with the sight that met her when she sprang up the remaining stairs and burst into the room, the woman,

instead of rescuing the little flame-enveloped victim, only shrieked and wrung her hands and fell helpless upon the floor.

Attracted by the woman's resounding cries, just as we entered the door, both Dian and myself involuntarily cried out, 'Stella,' and bounded upward and along the re-echoing halls. A moment later I had reached the room, and unheeding the fire that burned my hands and scorched my face, I snatched our darling to my arms and quickly wrapped her in the heavy sweeping draperies that hung within reach.

I was too late, and our little one, our only one, frightfully burned, was unconscious of our mad tears and cries, and within a few hours died in frightful agony.

You can well understand how such a loss, under such conditions, swept the very earth from under our feet. For weeks we despaired of Dian's life.

During this terrible trial my wife's cousin, Alice Huntington came, and took upon herself the burden of the nursing. For weeks she scarcely left Dian's bedside, and for many days the only hope I had of life

was through Alice. Her hopeful faith in the answer to our prayers kept me from despair, and when the crisis was past I believed that it was Alice Huntington's unselfish devotion and earnest prayers, and not the doctors, that had saved my wife.

From that hour I never again saw my gay hearted girlish wife. After many weeks, however, youth and an elastic constitution won the battle and she came back, reason restored, yet a changed creature. It was as if the light of her life had been extinguished, and a settled sadness lay upon her lovely face: I abandoned business that I might devise and carry out plans for her restoration and within a few months she began to look less ghastly and unnatural, a little color stole into her cheeks and her eyes had something of their old earnest look. She seemed to rise from despair and from some higher source, and through other power than mine, to receive some measure of comfort and consolation. As nearly as I can recollect, it was about six months from the date of Stella's death, that the dream began: Yes, I say dream, for it is nothing

but a dream, a horrible and persistent and intangible shadow that has pursued us for sixteen years, has broken up our home, stolen my wife from me, made us both wanderers, and now it would seem, completes the wreck of two lives within the walls of a lunatic asylum."

Varien paused for a moment in his recital, but when he had gained mastery over his sudden burst of feeling, and driven back the tremor that had crept into his voice, the husband of this marvelous dreamer took up the thread of his story.

That he had retained as much self-control and cheerfulness as seemed to characterize his usual manner, was the more surprising as the story proceeded.

"One morning," he continued, "just in the gray of dawn I was suddenly wakened by my wife, whose quick, startled cries rang out through our chamber and whose strange excitement soon ended in violent hysterical sobbing.

It was some minutes before she was calm enough to answer my alarmed inquiries, and

when she finally did, it was a singular story she conveyed in her broken speech.

'I have seen her,' she cried: 'seen her and held her in my arms. She lives, our Stella lives and breathes; she did not die; out there, beyond the grave, our child lives on; I have seen her, talked with her; for hours my darling has once more lain in her mother's arms.' Again the wild sobs choked her, and I waited for further explanation. Presently, through eagerness to tell me, she conquered her weakness, and related the dream or vision, in which she had seen our child; a dream so remarkable, so intelligently equipped and rationally conducted, that I too, becoming interested, fell to questioning her as if it had been reality.

Had the dream ended here all had been well, but it did not: it was renewed the next night, and the next, and on through weeks, months and years this phantom life continued, until at last my wife lived only in another world than this.

At first I was pleased, interested, entertained, even soothed by these dream pictures. I adored my wife, and this dream brought

greater consolation for our darling's loss, than did my love, or the so-called consolations of religion. I too had fondly loved our little one, and even these weird reports from no man's land comforted me: they were sweet suggestions of what she might now be in Heaven.

Each night the dream began exactly where it had ended the previous one: the life in shadow land going uninterruptedly forward from the first. Day by day these vagaries of empty dreams fastened themselves more firmly upon the waking mind of the mother, while the wife drifted slowly but surely from the human love of her husband.

Touched at first by these vivid pictures, that Dian continued to draw of these dream happenings, I was as eager to hear as she to relate these curious customs of dreamland. Seeing that it somewhat restored her to her old bright self I blessed the innocent hallucination that has since proved such a curse, for that which at first seemed but a harmless consolation, slowly but surely became the blight of her existence. Each night she would go to sleep full of anticipations of

her dream, and wakened each morning regretting that it was ended. She wakened each morning only to recount the dream, to speculate upon its mystery, and to drift still farther from the realities of a real world.

Through this dream, in which I had no part, I was now permitted to trace our child's development in this phantom life. Through her mother's eyes I saw our dream child growing strong and rosy, chattering and lisping and laughing in infant progress. Day by day, or rather night by night, the dream carried her forward in the natural process of physical and intellectual growth. In stature, in expression and in deportment, she rounded as do children in real life. She was like the children of earth in her merry tricks and simple pleasures, unlike them only in the absence of all willfulness and disobedience, and of all selfish and unlovely traits.

For many weeks I continued to listen to this remarkable dream with morbid interest, and, fight it as I would, the influence of this fatal cheat I could not repel.

Dian further explained that the child's environment never materially changed; that she dwelt in a certain home which retained

its character as a home, and yet a home as unlike the houses we designate as such, as is the king's palace to the peasant's hut. She would try to describe its lofty proportions and splendid appearance, yet when I would question her as to locality, or its relation to other houses or palaces, she could give me no satisfaction.

Another marked difference, she explained, between those people and such as live in the flesh, was their peculiar power of creating their own surroundings. They did not as with us flit from room to room, but as their desire or necessity changed, their surroundings faded and were rebuilt on the instant.

In this country of myth intention was instant with change.

Nor, she persisted, were these people anything like orthodox angels: they were men and women, earnest, intelligent, studious, yet beings, which without fleshly bodies, or apparent weight, appeared to exist as naturally and as simply as do these same spirits when clothed in flesh. More than this: she said these people seemed to live and move and work in a natural state of exhilaration.

Uplifted or 'inspired' was the word she most frequently employed to express the impression made upon her. There was, she maintained, such a glow and fervor in all they expressed and enjoyed, such a ring of sincerity in all they proclaimed and such absence of selfishness in all they did, as to inspire the utmost confidence and love. The freedom, beauty and joyousness of their condition, Dian said, were impossible to describe. The permanent character of their conduct, she declared, might be likened to that of heavy mortals when uplifted, and for the moment made care free by wine, except that here exhilaration was free and natural and fine: it was never forced and false.

But to me the most singular phase of this wonderful dream was the fact that I had no part in it; my wife said that I never appeared, that my name was never mentioned, and that among all the people concerned with our child's life there, there was no relative or friend of mine. From this enchanted land and from the reunited lives of Dian and her daughter, I, the husband and father, was excluded and forgotten."

Chapter III.

THE DREAM WORLD.

THIS at first," continued Mr. Varien, "made little or no impression upon me, none in fact until I heard my wife declare that her dream life was no less a reality than this one, and that her dream world was the true one and this the delusion. Then, indeed, I experienced a sense of annoyance and injury, which soon rose to a positive jealousy—jealousy of this formless rival that was stealing my darling. Ashamed, however, of my weakness, I concealed my increasing anxiety and maintained an outward interest in her dream.

Our daughter, my wife assured me, was surrounded chiefly by persons of our kindred, nearly all of whom were long since dead. Some of these quaintly clothed people Dian at once recognized from family portraits in

her father's house, others by strong family traits and resemblances, while still others she accepted as relatives upon their own assertion and their familiarity with the Williston family history. Her own father and mother, of the latter of whom she had no recollection, were part of this permanent household, and in both herself and her child they exhibited the deepest interest.

There were strangers to her, also, she said, some in ancient, others in modern dress; persons who appeared and disappeared at irregular intervals, and who seemed apart from the vital concerns of the household. The child, however, had one inseparable companion, one who was termed among these ghosts as a 'personal guardian.' This perpetual attendant was Dian's twin sister, Doris, who had died at the age of fifteen, two years before our marriage. The bond between the sisters had been peculiarly strong, and their love was of a most beautiful and devotional character. It was she, the beloved sister, who now had our little one in charge, an arrangement that to Dian seemed most natural and proper.

While all the others of this household in ghostland took a deep interest in the child, it was Doris only who kept her continually in sight, and to her the little one appealed in all her desires.

Though the others maintained a friendly supervision, they seemed to recognize the right of guardianship vested in this devoted sister of my wife.

In this shadowy home circle, Dian confessed herself, though not an interloper, yet an alien, a guest, rather, before whom the inner life of the house is revealed, but in which government she had no voice. She was with, but not of them; she perceived their wisdom, but was unacquainted with their plans; and while her child still clung to her with marvelous affection, she yet seemed to realize that authority existed in another.

In spite of myself I felt an increasing dread of this recurring dream. This inward protest grew until the delusion in which she lived became a dread to me, and I cast about for means to break the spell. I loved my wife devotedly, and her love for me I had

never questioned, but now it seemed as if some fiend in angel guise had supplanted me. I was then a man of friendly impulses and social habits: I loved life and living, and during the first years of our married life enjoyed my profession and mapped out great achievement in the legal world.

For the mysterious and uncanny I have an instinctive horror, and with so-called occultism and oriental fads I have no patience.

I married a bright, loving, lovable woman, one I had believed would share my life, its practical joys and sorrows; one who could love in the flesh and still be my inspiration to success. I need not say that her sensitive spirit soon felt my unspoken resentment, and was deeply shocked and wounded. At that time she would have renounced the dream, so keen was her sense of justice and duty; but she could not. Over that invisible world she held no sway. She was as powerless to prevent as I to forbid: we were both mere playthings of a dream. I was hurt and humiliated, while she, though unable to resist the steady pressure, still found

satisfaction in that other life. Irritated and unhappy, I would alternately check or encourage her confidence, keeping her vibrating, as it were, between tears and smiles.

Unreasonable as it may appear, I was at the same time eager for and angry over these baseless revelations. Try as I would, I could not crush my own interest in our child's daily life as it expanded through this magical dream. In her pleasures and playmates, and in the curious and cunningly devised games with which her elders provided amusement for the little one, I could not but be interested.

And what our Stella said and did from day to day, and even the songs she would sing, were all told over to me, when my mood would permit me to listen and repay the recital. At such times I questioned my wife closely, some of which questions she readily answered, and again she appeared as wholly uninformed as myself.

'If your dream folks are real spiritual beings,' I would ask, 'how do you account

for houses and furnishings and for clothing of such beauty and variety?'

'I can not,' she would answer, 'more than it seems only natural and reasonable to find intelligent beings, even though ethereal, surrounded by more than empty space; orthodox angels are vague beings of imagination, unscientifically and unnaturally adorned with feathered wings, and mistily draped in gauzy substance, and they are somehow thought to have no occupation: existing in space and floating among white clouds. Real spirits, however, have varied surroundings, and differ in appearance more pronouncedly than men of earth, for here individuality is not fettered or masked by convention.

'They are clothed in countless fashions, and have innumerable lines of employment and happiness. Such beings are inconceivable without definite surroundings, and definite purposes with which to intelligently concern themselves.

'Nor,' she admitted, 'do these shining ones wear halos, such as artists attempt to portray, and yet they are, as it were, clothed

with light. The sudden entrance to, or rather appearance in, a room or a garden, of one of these dream folks, adds to the radiance that pervades all space, while the gathering of a friendly group of students, or of happy strollers, produces an illumination that is indescribable.'

How these angelic people made their own surrounding, Dian explained, as through the law of mental force. In a certain sense, she admitted, man made his own surroundings, and shaped his own environment, here on earth, and yet that which is but partial in this world, she claimed was complete in the other.

'The same law that leads a man to seek his affinities in this life, will enable him to find them in that,' she said, 'and it is but a higher degree of intelligence, greater acquirement of thought force, that permits the spiritual man to construct the ideals of either form or color, that his fancy may create.

'Upon the lower plane, a man may only build his palace approximating to his ideal, but where thought alone is the force, and

the elements of construction are correspondingly fine and tractable, he is enabled to build from the thought, and to realize the ideal.

'The law that makes the human hand subject to the human will, is, in spiritual life, only better understood, further developed, and so enables these beings to control their surroundings. Thought is instant with motion, transformation, change.'

Once, in relating some marvelous exhibitions of this ghostly wisdom, Dian said:

'While we mortals seem to have comprehended the laws of disintegration, destruction and decay, they appear fully acquainted with the processes of creation and materialization: with the germs of life as well as the seeds of death. While we, with our clumsy methods and material, blunder in plan and construction, they, with natural forces at command, combine, build and reproduce at will, and having no limitations except in the degree of desire, you may gain some idea of the beauty and sublimity of their surroundings. They live in "houses not made with hands."

'These dwellers in dreamland are masters, not playthings of the law. Does this seem absurd?'

'Do your dream folks eat or sleep?' I would ask her.

'They rest at times, I am quite sure,' she would reply, 'rest from thought-work, but food or dining or anything like refreshment I have never seen. No, the conditions which govern physical sensations are entirely wanting in this country.'

'But you tell me they are clothed like ordinary mortals,' I persisted.

'Clothed, yes, but not like ordinary mortals,' Dian explained. 'Though they cling affectionately to the fashions of their own time in earth life, yet they are by no means restricted to such costumes. Clothing, or rather the colors in which they appear, follow here the general law, and transform or entirely change by thought force or desire of the wearer. They delight in playing with color and effect, and the superior beauty of these spiritual garments may be measured by their finer artistic perceptions, and the infinite range of mate-

rial upon which they draw. The color and quality and design of these ethereal robes are circumscribed only by the will of the designer.'

Time passed, month followed month, years were added to years. For me the time had run on joylessly, hopelessly; to her, calmly, fatally. My loneliness had settled into dull resignation: while she was more completely absorbed in the dream with each recurring vision. I had ceased to reason with her or to uselessly distress both her and myself with any sort of demands or requests, but at thirty-two my hair was whitening and I had acknowledged my life a failure.

I had ceased to dispute it, when she insisted that her dream was a reality, for what argument was as strong and convincing as her nightly experience. Her love for me was what a sister might bestow. Her hold on life slackened: she lived among shadows, talking only of the child, the mystical child whose life and education she was following with absorbed delight.

The years rolled on, until thirteen had elapsed, and even yet the outward change

was not so marked as the inner estrangement of our two lives.

Real life was now the dream to her, and waking hours were colorless spans of existence, from which pleasure had fled and in which duties were mechanically performed; while I, wrapped in my alternating moods of hope and of morbid speculation, simply waited for each day's loneliness with at least an outward show of patience.

About this time Dian talked much of the child's developing beauty of mind and body. She told me of her remarkable voice, for it seems that music enters largely into the pleasure of that ghostly life, and would frequently repeat snatches of strangely beautiful songs, to which she played weird accompanying chords.

I could no longer conceal from myself the work of destruction in our home, and I feared it might now threaten reason. My wife had at last refused to go into society, where pleasures had long since been mockeries to her, and obligations only cruel burdens.

I consented even to this, for pride's sake, for while she was as intellectually keen and

as serenely gracious as of old, she had acquired a peculiar air and manner, an absorbed dreamy look, and even in her voice betrayed a listless undertone that affected others as it did myself. Though we had sacredly guarded her secret from the world, I now began to see that my wife's nameless air of indifference and weariness had aroused comment, and suggested that condition spoken of as 'In the world but not of it.' Her sensitiveness had at first prompted our concealment, while I, with an ingrained horror of the superstitious and uncanny, was only too glad, as time went on, to conceal the skeleton and to bear my disappointment in silence.

There came a day, however, when believing that reason if not life was in the balance, I broke faith with her, and secretly consulted a well known physician, a specialist in nervous diseases. In the guise of a legal friend he visited us frequently, and at the end of two months, after cultivating her acquaintance and leading her into the discussion of many questions, he declared her

perfectly sane, so far as such medical diagnosis goes, but that she was physically delicate, and advised immediate change of scene, and ocean travel.

'There may be,' he said, 'some slight abnormal excitement in some of the brain tissues, but nothing is discoverable: there are no tangible evidences, except this curious haunting dream, and it is to be hoped that with new surroundings and fresh impressions being daily registered upon the brain, that a cure may be effected.'

From this dated our wanderings.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

TO the proposed voyage," continued Varien, "my wife at first objected, fearing the dream might be broken by the change, but finally with her usual sweetness listened to my earnest appeal. After urging my own claim, and basing the entire trip upon my love for her, she yielded, and the cheerless voyage began.

There was however no interruption of the horrible dream. It rode the waves with us, entered foreign ports and traveled with us through the gay and sunny lands we visited in vain search for peace.

Once satisfied that her life in ghostland had not been sacrificed, my wife settled to the new order of life with passive indifference, and I, the last hope gone, was filled with utter despair.

You can readily understand how this abnormal life told almost as much upon me as it did upon my wife: more in fact, for in her delusion she found happiness, while I, cut off from all the natural joys of men and of life in the world, became deeply, silently hopeless.

We traveled continually, stopping only where and when the mood directed us. We traveled without route, destination or purpose. What did it matter where we went, since that horrible phantom must bear us company. So completely was Dian now absorbed into the dream life that I was familiar with a hundred plans for Stella's happiness while making none for our own. My wife's world was a myth to me, mine to her, a cold, stupid, unsatisfactory delusion; while she seemed to live and move in the atmosphere of lofty, unearthly beings, I, of earth, longed for my honest share in life, as I knew it.

Did I cease loving her? Ah, no; that were impossible, for she is too sweet and pure and genuinely noble to turn back love once given her: but for years I have loved

her, much as men love their wives in heaven. The form of my wife, the beautiful physical shell, remained passively near me, but the spirit of my first love had long since gone from me.

I had abandoned home, country, profession and friends, for what? Yet duty, pity and the memory of other days continued to bind me.

Once after consulting an eminent German physician I tried the effect of a mental shock. Boldly urging my own claim, I laid bare my incomplete life, the wasted years and foiled ambitions: I confessed my jealous, unsatisfied state, portrayed rudely the life to which she had doomed me, and urged as a final argument the husband's first claim, and wifely duty as against mother love.

I succeeded in making her dangerously ill, without exorcising the shadow: then I gave up, dropping back into silence, and leaving her to dream.

The process of Stella's education, as related by my wife, during these days, was exceedingly interesting. The child, now bordering upon womanhood, was described

as beautiful beyond words. Her instruction had all been accomplished at home, under the constant supervision of Doris, her personal guardian, and with the approval of that large and permanent household. She had not been under the instruction of one or two, but many masters: a series, as it were, of trained specialists, each an artist and lover of his art.

Among these wise and interesting teachers, was one of whom my wife came to talk frequently; one whom she claims has been more particularly concerned with the child's moral than intellectual growth. He, she said, cared more for Stella's development along the loftier lines of justice than those of power: eager, rather, that her rapidly acquired control of the elements should be exercised only in the cause of truth, and in the spirit of love toward all created life. He was the priest rather than professor: less a giver of the law than a minister of divine love.

This godlike being for many years was spoken of, by my wife, as the 'Nameless.' Of all the phantom group he alone was

without name. After Stella's tenth year, at which time this particular personage appeared, he became an element in Dian's life.

She talked much of this 'Nameless' seer, or prophet, or god, described his angelic old young face, his majestic form and movement, dilated upon his gentleness, patience and profound learning, and she amazed me not a little by odds and ends of scientific knowledge and moral philosophy that she seemed to bring out of dreamland. I humored her, accepting as truth the maxims and the doctrines of this mystical master, and spoke of the 'Nameless' with profound respect.

In the child's instruction, explained my wife, there were neither arbitrary rules nor any suggestion of restraint or show of authority. The getting of knowledge was made a delight. It was sought for itself, not to enable one to go into society, to accumulate wealth or to obtain an office. Study went on without urging, or any prearrangement, or the smallest friction. In this ideal school everything depended upon the ability and temperament of the scholar,

and his or her sensitiveness at a certain time to a certain truth.

Stella was taught only as her mind opened naturally and spontaneously to receive. Her individual tastes were always considered. She was neither coerced, coaxed, driven nor commanded, and the time, the season, and each varying mood were always taken into the account. Now and then whole days were spent in the study of a single truth: weeks together had been devoted to music, and months were consumed in the demonstration of the chemical forces of nature.

In that life the word hurry is unknown. There is time to learn. There is no sense of haste nor need of it, and our little daughter, so said my wife, had time to learn, under this varied system of education, the secrets of the alchemists and the divinations of the astrologists.

'At one time,' said Dian, 'while the child was studying the law of growth, an entire month had been consumed by the master in teaching her: but at the end of that time this young girl could in the

twinkling of an eye grow a perfect blade of grass, or flower or shrub. There were no books. Principles were taught, and the ready comprehension and perfect memory of this angelic child rendered arbitrary symbols unnecessary. This perfect system of education put to shame our clumsier methods. These teachers in dreamland, it seems, do not deal out to unprepared or unwilling minds crude deductions from mere fragments of the truth and law.'

It was during our stay in Venice, less than a year ago, that my wife received new light, or so considered it, upon the character of her dream. We met here, quite accidentally, and became well acquainted with a Sir Allen Manderson, an English gentleman of great learning and culture. He was an elderly man, very opinionated and a trifle arrogant, but a most interesting and delightful conversationalist. Years of residence in India together with unlimited advantages of travel and keen powers of observation had broadened the man beyond the common prejudices of his countrymen and rendered him delightfully companionable.

My wife's interest in this dignified and scholarly man quite surprised me. She was habitually reticent now among strangers, but during the few weeks we remained in the city together, their acquaintance ripened into a genuine friendship. He and Dian seemed naturally attracted, which delighted me, as drawing her once more into the ordinary life of human beings. I welcomed and enjoyed any person or thing that proved a diversion to her. The tenor of their conversation, I admit, wearied me exceedingly. It continually bordered upon the speculative side and the moral phases of life.

I was tired of mysticism and unreality, and whenever I could do so without rudeness, I would leave them alone, or at best took little part in their theories. I gathered enough, however, to know that Sir Allen had been at least a superficial student of occult science, and was pretty thoroughly grounded in oriental doctrines. He was a—a—Theosophist, I think you call them, a propounder of that Eastern philosophy which seems lately to have secured a hear-

ing even in practical, progressive America.

This so-called wisdom religion, which to me is little else than jargon, was received and absorbed by my wife with amazing credulity. In these interminable discussions of spirit force, karma, re-incarnation and astral conditions, she seemed to find a solution for her dream. Sir Allen was the only person to whom she had confided this secret of her life, which confidence he highly prized, and in which phenomenon he agreed with Dian, as to its reality and purpose for good.

When he was leaving the city, he begged permission to present some books to my wife, and his gift proved to be a very considerable library of occult science, philosophy and romance, mere outlandish twaddle, so far as my judgment went, but a literature in which Dian reveled for months.

Though she had seemed to like Sir Allen exceedingly, she did not seem to notice his departure, and I plainly saw that her interest in him had been mainly impersonal. She was seeking merely a key to the locked-up invisible. Another bond of sympathy

between this white-haired Englishman and my wife was his unceasing sorrow over the loss of an only son, a young man of brilliant promise, who had died in India, he explained to us, under most distressing circumstances, and about the time of our Stella's death. This son, it appears, had devoted much time to the study of this wisdom religion, and after his death, in the hope of gaining some of their alleged spiritual knowledge, Sir Allen had himself visited these secluded priests of Buddha, and was quite won over by their wisdom and piety. Here he also learned that his son had been an accepted pupil among them, and an 'Initiate,' whatever that may mean.

Among the books given her by Sir Allen, and so absorbingly read," continued Varien, after a moment, "was 'Zanoni,' Bulwer's masterpiece, a creation of fancy I had once read with pleasure as a literary effort. In this, however, Dian seemed to find some extraordinary revelation, and when she had finished it she said, 'I have found a name for him, this nameless master: it is Zanoni.'

Thereafter Zanoni became a familiar household word; and, strange to say, she carried this notion into dreamland, where, addressing the shade extraordinary by this fanciful name, she was overjoyed that he had responded with every sign of satisfaction.

Less than six months from the date of Sir Allen's departure from Venice, occurred the beginning of what seems to be the end.

During the entire fifteen years my wife has lived this dual life the hallucination in itself has been singularly delightful. It is in waking life only that she has suffered, repined or appeared dissatisfied. I saw only too late how grateful I should have been to the unseen forces which so long had conspired to render the cheat a happy one. While the dream had practically blotted my life from among the living, separated me from congenial associates and occupations, and robbed me of all natural joys, it had spared her any touch of anxiety or unrest. Though myself forsaken of the gods, I could still be grateful that the mysterious life she led was full of pleasure and of interest.

For some days I had noticed in her a peculiar and unusual restlessness of manner. There was an unwonted pallor in her face and heavy shadows about the eyes, but so long as she did not complain I feared to suggest illness. One morning, however, she wakened me with the same startled cries and uncontrolled emotion that had marked the beginning of the dream. Springing suddenly to a sitting posture, and with tear-wet eyes and outstretched arms, she called again and again for Stella and Zanoni.

'What is it, dear? What does this mean? Are you ill?' I took her in my arms, soothing her as best I could.

My wife is a woman of rare self-control, and it was not long until she had conquered her feeling and regained a sweet but forced composure.

'You know,' she explained, in answer to my earnest entreaties, 'that our daughter is now nearly eighteen, and that the tenth of this November she completes the eighteenth year. You will also recollect that I have spoken many times lately of some unusual event, her graduation or debut, or some

great change in her life. Of this change Doris and the others have frequently spoken and I have been gently admonished from time to time that the beginning of what they termed "The higher life" was close at hand.

'Naturally,' continued Dian, 'referring to the experience of this earth life, and to our graded system of education, I imagined this to be an event in her life corresponding to our graduation, a social coming out, some public acknowledgment of a finished course, and a definite beginning of larger liberties and greater responsibilities.

'Anticipating nothing but higher work, and fresh delights in which I might continue to share, I was pleased with all the growing evidences of a completed course of study; I never doubted but that I should be with her and privileged to watch over the continued development of my beautiful dream child. So confident of this have I been, that in my pride for her, I had tried to imagine the robes she would wear on that occasion; for, like myself, the child loves color, and to please and amuse me would often flash in

upon me clothed in garments that seemed to have been cut from the rainbow itself or filched from the sapphire skies or emerald fields. At other times this young girl, who could play at will with the indescribable hues of the sunrise and sunset, would dart in upon me suddenly like some brilliant fire-flame, only to transform again the sheen and glow into the softer glories of the autumn wood or the pale tints that lurk in the heart of a sea-shell.'

One thing, however, Dian admitted had puzzled her throughout these preparations.

While the entire circle had spoken frequently of this impending change, she said none of them had seemed to share her own view of it. They had discussed the matter softly, as if it were the occasion of deep, reverent thankfulness, rather than boisterous congratulation. 'Not from what they say,' my wife explained, 'but from what my eyes now discern, I am learning the character of this coming event. Gazing upon Stella herself I have read the secret of this change, the meaning of this higher life. As

I have so often told you,' she continued, 'our dream child has never appeared other than a child of flesh, so beautiful of body, so fresh and pure, so innocently gay, so bewitchingly tender. Physically strong, mentally keen, and spiritually so fine and true, has appeared our little one who lives in this kingdom of dreams.

'Gradually, however,' and my wife could scarcely restrain her rising emotion, 'I have been attracted to a change in her. Indefinable at first, it has now become a dreadful certainty. The speck on the horizon has covered all the blue sky. This change that so alarms me, and foreshadows grief to me, has affected both the physical and finer nature of the child: the physical losing its glow, the spiritual taking on more delicate tones. As you know, there has never been a time when our Stella's love for me has not seemed the ruling principle of her life. Beyond the affection and gentle obedience toward Doris, her guardian, and beyond the awe and reverence she entertained for the great master Zanoni, has been her love for me. None has stood

so close to her, since the hour of her birth, as I, her mother.

'Now, however,' and Dian sobbed bitterly, 'the real human love of the child seems to have been chilled. The impulsive, clinging daughter is no more; no less sweet and dutiful is my darling, but with a tender, conscious superiority that reverses all our relations. I seem no longer to be the mother of this child. Girlish gaiety has given way to the serenity of a saint, and her rosy body has changed to more fragile outlines. It appears as transparent marble rather than that which resembles flesh. Her face has acquired a more ethereal look, and her expression is of such unearthly loveliness that I am awed and terrified. Last night,' continued Dian, 'the dreadful truth dawned upon me. Some mighty law, the same relentless law that destroyed her physical body, is now slowly but surely stealing her from the plane upon which we have so long met in dreams: and for the second time I must be made to suffer my darling's death.'

What could I say or do to check her

passionate sorrow? What hope or consolation could I offer to such grief? Neither reason nor philosophy could explain or console.

With deep anxiety I noted the gathering shadows in Dian's beautiful eyes, and my heart was wrung in sympathy. When I would hear her murmur, again and again, 'She will leave me: they are taking her from me,' I had no power to lighten her grief.

We were now living in complete retirement. I had given up all normal life to share her unnatural destiny, and at times I feared that I rather than the dreamer might become insane. The shadows deepened, even around our clouded existence, when Dian, convinced that Stella was to be taken, began to lose both flesh and appetite and finally the power of sleep. This was indeed an unforeseen calamity, and I realized the extremity of the danger. True, the days past had been to her but periods of imprisonment, filled with longing for the night, and night had again been given over to disappointment and fear of separation;

but when sleep, that only portal to the other world, was now denied, her condition was truly pitiable.

I suggested opiates; these she tried, and deep sleep followed. My satisfaction, however, was turned back to dread when she told me that she had not entered the dream world. Once convinced that sleep, artificially produced, brought no vision of the child, Dian absolutely refused to take another fraction of the morphine.

I was now completely at bay, and she also. Realizing the gravity of the situation, I suggested our return to America. It was at this time that thoughts of special treatment suggested themselves; this, in turn, leading up to you and your hospital.

Cautiously presenting this idea, I was delighted to find my wife not only willing but anxious to follow my suggestion. She turned to me with a half smile, saying:

'Frank, I am not insane, of this I am satisfied, but to set your mind at rest and to demonstrate to us both that my dream lies beyond the science of medicine, I will agree to this experiment. To gain one per-

fect night's sleep, such as I have enjoyed for years, I would submit to any treatment, or enter any character of hospital or asylum. Let us start.'

Nothing but her extraordinary will-power enabled her to make the voyage, preserving as she did a perfect outward composure. It was a long trial of sleeplessness. There were brief glimpses of the child, between long hours spent in pacing the deck and staring at the silvery waves or into the starlit sky. But she has survived the trip, and now, doctor," said Mr. Varien in conclusion, "I have brought her to you as a last hope. If there is anything in medical science that will exorcise this fatal dream and restore my wife to normal living, I beg of you to expend your skill in her behalf. I have no hope now, except through science."

CHAPTER V.

SCIENCE FAILS.

FULLY agree with you", I remarked to Fred, breaking the silence that had followed his conclusion of Varien's story. "This is a most extraordinary case; so very extraordinary, so hopelessly pathetic, so manifestly absurd, and yet so fascinating withal, that I'm bound to wait over a few days to watch developments."

"I knew you could never resist such an opportunity," rejoined the doctor; "but listen. I have in mind another contingency likely to arise, one that will be well worth waiting for. Why Davy," and my old chum began pacing the room excitedly, "if I could contrive to carry this woman beyond the fatal tenth, I will regard it as a creditable job, and we will save both her life and reason."

"The tenth," I repeated; "I do not understand."

"Oh! I had forgotten that I had told you nothing of my personal experience since her arrival," he said. "You may remember that the dream child completes her eighteenth year on November tenth?"

I nodded. "And to-day?" I inquired.

"Is the seventh."

"I will wait," was my reply.

"In view of this fact," said Dr. Haynes, "her husband left yesterday, with great reluctance, though called to Philadelphia by a telegram announcing his father's illness. However, it proved nothing serious, and he wires me to-day that he will return in the morning.

You will note that within four days, if this dream follows its ordinary course, and the woman's own prophecy holds good, the dream child will finish the course that now heralds a change, and some solution of the mystery will come.

What that result will be," continued the doctor thoughtfully, "no one can predict; whether it is to be restored normal condition of the mother, or a new phase of torture, are mere matters of conjecture.

If, as sometimes occurs at the crisis of a disease; if she can be compelled by some means to fall into a long, natural sleep, it may save her life and end this hallucination."

Here the doctor stopped to explain his treatment, which up to date had failed to break the force of the insomnia. Exercise, diet, baths, electricity, were without appreciable results. Nor had malt liquors, wines or bromides produced the least effect. Once, to save her from sheer insanity, he had insisted, after fifty hours of sleeplessness, that she take an opiate.

It had of course rested her, but the after regret and the redoubled anxiety concerning the child but carried her back with an increased languor of body and wakefulness of brain. She was possessed by the fear that during some such enforced sleep she might be cheated of the closing vision, and thereby lose the key to all this mystery, for which she was continually looking.

During the brief snatches of natural rest now accorded her, she had torturing glimpses of the beautiful girl, which only increased the sorrow of separation. She told her hus-

band that there now shone but a dim receding figure with an ethereal face and shadowy smile, an angel that moved with an undulating grace like the waves of the sea, and whose voice, sweet and faint, was like the hollow chime of far-off bells.

After such a vision, the mother would sit for hours, her great wonderful eyes staring fixedly into space, her thin hands clasping and unclasping upon the open pages of some book. From habit she still clung to her books, though seldom, I believe, reading a word.

I saw her no more during the day of my arrival, but learned from Fred that she had retired at sunset, confessing to an increased weakness. At midnight, when the doctor invited me to accompany him on his rounds, I eagerly accepted. I wanted to know of the dreamer.

We had the good luck to find his interesting patient asleep, enjoying, or shall I say suffering, one of those brief periods of rest.

In response to the doctor's query of how long, the nurse responded, "A little more than ten minutes."

"Here, Davy," and Fred invited me to follow him.

"I want you to observe another phase of this case."

Advancing to the side of the bed, I scrutinized the sleeper narrowly, felt her pulse, then laid my own upon a cold, rigid hand. There was neither perceptible respiration nor any natural warmth.

"Good Heavens!" Was the woman dead? Again I examined the face, and felt for the heart-beat of the sleeper. The features were set, with the ominous lines and ghastly pallor of the dead. I touched her cheek, it was icy; there was no faint flutter of the heart; her limbs were rigid, lifeless, dead. Surely this was death, or a ghastly counterfeit.

I looked at Fred. "What is it?" he asked.

"If this is not death," I replied, "it is a cataleptic condition; that abnormal condition which still puzzles us. Go on," I urged; "explain. Is this a frequent occurrence?"

"This," responded the doctor slowly, "is the crowning enigma. The condition you see is that in which Mrs. Varien has taken

her only rest and sleep in sixteen years, except when drugged."

"Marvelous," and I stared first at him, and then at the rigid sleeper.

"Nor can you waken her by ordinary means. To call her, or to touch her, does not rouse her, and she will lie utterly insensible to your efforts until the law that holds her sets her free."

"And her husband?"

"Has guarded her all these years. Early in this dream he was attracted to the peculiar character of her sleep, and fearing some harm to her, has never left her for a night, until since she has been here."

"How do you account for this?"

"I have given it up," answered Fred, ruefully. "It is n't in the books, and we may be driven into accepting her theory."

"Ah! she has a theory. Then she knows of this?" I asked.

"Certainly," replied Fred, "and claims that the soul is absent from the body during these periods, leaving only the inanimate physical shell upon the bed.

I confess that both her appearance and

history bear out this notion," concluded the doctor, with a look of chagrin.

I have always maintained that physicians who do not love their profession are charlatans, no matter how many diplomas they may have obtained; but such as are entitled to them must be familiar not only with anatomy and acquainted with blood circulation and nerve centers, but also with the mental constitution of men and the secret springs of human action. Long ago I recognized disease of mind and body as inseparable, and that the will was the stronger factor for health or against it. I had come to see that faith cure, hypnotism, magnetism and modern mind cure, were but fragments of a common law, old as mind and intelligence itself.

The "Public Mind," that social tyrant called "The concensus of opinion," stands forever as the foe of discovery and development. Science, while issuing her infallible pronunciamentos, forgets that her facts of to-day were the heresies and dreams of yesterday. Science declines to recognize in the crank of to-day the prophet for posterity. The "regular school" buried Mesmer under

its weight of scorn, and now we are demanding a law to restrict the practice of hypnotism within the profession. Science still derides faith cure, but is become more tolerant toward the idea of supremacy of mind over matter.

It is a wise votary of Esculapius who in this, the nineteenth century, hesitates to pronounce his brother a fool.

Schoolmen are too arrogant, and the people fear ridicule; we rail too much at words; we live in an attitude of self-defence, fearing we may succumb to some new "ism," and that our orthodoxy may be filched from us by some sleight-of-mind maneuver.

Thoughtful men hesitate to ridicule what they can not explain, and we two had agreed long ago, as a fundamental principle of education, that all things were possible. We respected not only the faith, but the professed knowledge of others. We frequently differed from other men, but we never called them fools.

"I confess," said the doctor, as we separated for the night, "I anticipate this

crisis with great curiosity and no little apprehension."

From the following morning, the seventh, we had agreed to lose no phase of her condition that might have even a remote bearing upon the cause or solution.

The next morning, on being presented to Frank Varien, who had arrived by the early limited, I agreed with Dr. Haynes in pronouncing him a gentleman and the prince of good fellows. He was a man intended for practical success in life, and I heartily pitied him as I read in his face the story of his cheated life. Varien was a fine-looking man, of splendid physical proportions, and his well-shaped head, open countenance, and frank blue eye, denoted a fair balance of brains as well. His brown hair was broadly streaked with gray, and deep lines marred his face; an honest, kindly face, intended for the open courts of life.

If physiognomy goes for anything, Varien was neither sensualist nor epicure. He was a man given no more to physical appetites than to poetic fancies. He was of the every-day, common-sense type, to whom supersti-

tions are abominable and mysticism absurd. I continued to marvel at the sacrifice this man had made of all his ambitions, for the woman to whom he was married but certainly not mated.

At Mrs. Varien's urgent request, her cousin, Miss Huntington, had been informed of their arrival and requested to come. The lady arrived one train later than Varien, and, I confess, a more gracious and charming woman it has never been my good fortune to meet. I was inclined to think there must have been something in that old rumor, for such women are never unmarried except from choice. Though older than Mrs. Varien she appeared younger, and displayed in that somber atmosphere such a fresh, inspiring nature, that we three men brightened and somewhat threw off the uncanny influence of the dreamer. She was a tall, fair, handsome woman, with a countenance as frank and honest as I have ever seen. Her clear, violet-blue eyes looked the world fearlessly in the face, and a somewhat decisive mouth and chin were softened by a ready and unaffected smile. Her practi-

cal sympathy and courage were infectious. Both Fred and I were heartily glad of such an addition to the sick room, while Varien listened to her every word with eager interest, and in her presence seemed to lose the air of depression and restraint that characterized his bearing in the presence of his wife.

I witnessed the meeting between the cousins, and I perceived that whatever memories may have been buried in the visitor's heart, between these two existed a loyal friendship.

Varien rarely addressed Miss Huntington, though I observed that her lightest word caught his attention, while her manner toward him was perfectly easy and perfectly cordial. She displayed the ease and cordiality that a clever woman uses either as a decoy or an armor.

"Varien was a fool," I remarked to Fred, a little later.

"Probably; most men are," was the cheerful response.

I was admitted to the long consultation that followed Varien's arrival, and was

pleased that he held so stoutly to his wife's sanity.

"Had she been insane," he explained, "I would have given her every care, but I would not have so completely sacrificed my own life."

"What do you think would occur," I asked him, "were she to sleep and not enter this dream world?"

The husband shook his head.

"That," interrupted Dr. Haynes, "as I have already advised Mr. Varien, is the critical point, and a crisis quite in line with her own prophecy. With no reason except her own statement and the orderly sequence of the dream for years, I look for some sort of conclusion the tenth of November. That it will be a happy ending to this hallucination is my earnest hope; or, as I have warned her husband, it may end in death or unmistakable insanity."

I glanced at Varien, and could not but feel that with all his kindness of heart, and consideration for her, the man had grown restive under this restraint; that he was chafing under these bonds, and, uncon-

sciously perhaps, yearning for some solution of this death in life.

After a little silence, he rose, sighing deeply. "I will go to her now," he said, and went out of the room with a slow step and bowed head

A RETROSPECT.

SAID the Doctor when we were alone, "Isn't human nature the paradox of creation?"

"What now," I began, but he went on softly, "Isn't it the unexpected at every turn?"

"You make me curious, Fred, what has happened now, has this 'Dream Child'——?"

"No, it is not the 'Dream Child'. This time it is the father of that wonderful child who has been taking me into confidence on his own account and I shall not consider it as breaking faith to repeat the story to you, for he has already admitted you as consulting physician in the case and because the story has its bearing upon the whole situation we are dealing with.

"I especially want you to know of this conversation—no, it was scarcely a conversation, for I was but a listener to a recital that fur-

nishes to my mind very important sidelights upon this entire dream tragedy.

"Varien's unexpected confidence at the close of our morning's conference over the plans for the day, seemed to come quite unintentionally to himself. You know how it is now and then, that one will give confidences without premeditation, at the psychological moment to some listening, sympathetic friend.

"So, today, when Alice Huntington had been suddenly mentioned in connection with her devotion to her cousin, it was as if, all in a moment, old memories and old emotions long buried had made claim for recognition and expression.

"I saw the man's face change and darken and it was like the dropping of a mask, so quickly did his habitual expression of cheerfulness disappear, as he said without bitterness, but with conviction, 'I was a fool when I lost the way.'

"How," I began, but he did not seem to hear me, and taking no note of the interruption he asked abruptly, 'Dr. Haynes, what do you think of Alice Huntington?'

"That is an easy one," I returned, with a

pretense of jesting, "for I confess that I am completely captivated." Then, soberly, for I saw that he was in earnest, "She is one of the most charming women it has been my good fortune to meet. She is still very fair to look upon. She has intelligence, culture, sympathy and tact. She is companionable, likable, lovable. Her voice is low and musical; her movements graceful, her manner gracious and her entire "atmosphere" is magnetic and compelling, and—but can a man say more?"

'No', replied Varien, 'nor could a stranger well say more than this; but I, who have known her since infancy could add a volume to her nobility of soul, her loveliness of character and her usefulness in this sad old world.' Then continuing, 'Let me tell you something of my past and of the background of my life, as you see it here and now, and let me tell you something of my marriage, of which I have never spoken before to any friend or any physician, which may or may not furnish some connecting links with this unhappy dream life of my unfortunate wife.

'What I have to tell you may in a way explain my own conviction that my own dis-

appointments in life are but the final working out of some great universal but dimly understood Law of Retributive Justice.

'These years of exile and isolation, given over to vain conflicts with dreams and hallucinations have given me time to think of many things not congenial to a man of my temperament and ambitions, and while I am a practical, every-day sort of an individual, with a natural unbelief in "Spirits" and a natural aversion for the so-called "Occult", still I have come to see there are a good many more things in Heaven and Earth than I reckoned with in my youth, and through my own ignorance, or my own selfishness, I have lost out in the race for success and happiness and steeped my life in the vagaries of dreams and illusions.'

I was silent, seeing that he was not expecting an answer, but was in reality but seeking his own relief in this recital to a friend.

'I have never, I think, spoken to you of my early life, nor of my family, for our acquaintance just preceded my hasty marriage and those first years of happiness before that fatal accident. You probably never heard of my first early attachment, nor of the circum-

stances which surrounded my marriage to a mere unformed school-girl, a child-woman who should have been left untroubled with her dolls, her books and her dreams. Back of all this, however, lay my early opportunities ——and my blindness.

'Sometimes, as I review my early ambitions and my wasted years, I am moved to admiration for the exactness with which God or Nature balances the accounts of men. For, whether you call it "God", or "Destiny" or "Fate", there is *something* that overshadows the affairs of men and invokes punishment for violation of the Law of Right, and this whether we transgress that Law innocently or willfully, or ignorantly, as I did twenty years ago.'

Still without waiting for comment, Varien went right on in the even, colorless tone of one who is recounting another man's life rather than his own.

'And now I am referring to the episode, or tragedy, if you will, that made the fitting background to this present finale in an insane asylum.

'Twenty years ago I commanded everything that gives this world value. I had youth,

health, wealth, and brilliant prospects as my father's successor in the Law. I enjoyed the privileges and indulgences of an only child, and all this was crowned with the love and faith of a matchless girl.

'As you know, my father was a man of fine family and many honors, and was also rich by inheritance and by his great law practice, and my mother belonged to the best blood of this country. I had received everything that such parentage commands of care, education, pleasure and opportunity which are so closely related to wealth, culture, leisure and high social position.

'Up to the age of twenty-five my life had been one of varied advantages and pleasures, of joyous irresponsibility and of inexperiences and immature ambitions and aspirations.

'Alice Huntington and myself were, I might say, brought up together. Our parents, intimates in their youth, were neighbors in the same block in an aristocratic quarter of the city, and we naturally became the center of interest of the two families and the two homes, more especially by reason of the fact that each was an "only child".

'At the age of four years I learned my earliest lessons in love and chivalry, when I was permitted to visit and amuse and serve the infant princess of the Huntington home.

'This childish devotion was encouraged by the parents of each, more especially by our mothers, for both of them were women of romance and sentiment, and, as I learned many years after, these two young mothers had laid their happy plans for us before we were out of the kindergarten.

'Thus, almost in a literal sense, Alice and I had walked side by side from infancy into the unclouded dawn of man and woman's estate. Our home relations, material and financial, were so nearly balanced and our social advantages so nearly identical that our lives blended as much by circumstances as by our individual preferences. Between the two homes was a continual exchange of visits, courtesies and services that merged the life in each into a common atmosphere of freedom, friendship and affection.

'Neither Alice nor myself was ever able to mark the exact time when our childish attachment took on the deeper tones of grown up

love. Our fellowship had become so much a part of our lives, so complete, so unbroken and so exclusive that—on my part at least—it had all been accepted as the natural appurtenance of a young man's life.

'I failed utterly at that time and until long afterward, to appreciate the "gift of the gods." But, I have reviewed it all since in the light of a bitter experience. I realize that I accepted it then exactly as I did the material advantages of my life and that I appropriated her love and loyalty with the same tranquility that I received and used my father's fortune and position.

'The complaisant attitude of our parents and the gentle connivance of the intimate friends of both houses encouraged our childish comraderie and paired us off at all our youthful festivities and recreations.

'Separations in college and university days were bridged by the immature correspondence of boy and girl and by the successive vacations, which found us with ever recurring interest in each other and ever increasing self-sufficiency in our own companionship.

'When we finally returned from the "finish-

ing", I to an active association in my father's profession, and she to her important social position, it was still without a break in our happy relations.

'Shortly after this and without noticeable change in our outward manner and (on my part at least,) without definite "change of heart", we had slipped into an engagement, which merely looked forward to, but did not impetuously contemplate marriage. At this time we were so engaged in the gaieties and novelties of our golden youth and social position that we enjoyed each day without much thought of future obligations. Our future together merely appeared to us as natural and inevitable as the intimacy of the two households.

'Our parents warmly sanctioned our tentative engagement, merely exacting the delay necessary for my proper establishment in my profession and the year Mrs. Huntington had laid out for Alice's formal debut, and some other plans of travel and social pleasure.

'To this we both cheerfully assented as the order of our lives would not be changed nor our pleasures much interrupted.

'Thus time ran on gaily and happily for another six months, but, as it afterward appeared, without that novelty or intensity or unrest which are accounted as the necessary accompaniments of "love".

'And just here is where I was so stupid, after the manner of men, and where the woman was so much more mature in spirit than myself, for she did not need a long drawn discipline and suffering to work enlightenment.

'Our marriage had been fixed for the following December and it was now late in June, and my mother, Mrs. Huntington and Alice were to leave for London and Paris early in July on an important shopping trip; but in the interim we were arranging a Fourth of July celebration at my father's summer home on the Massachusetts coast, the party including both families and half a dozen of our intimate young friends.

'This occasion had been chosen for the announcement of our engagement to our friends and the public.

'That "Man proposes and God disposes" may be true, but I am still asking of Nature's unanswering God, why such wreckage of human

hopes and purposes is necessary to the working out of some "Universal Good".

'The day before we were to leave Philadelphia for Boston and the coast, a telegram to Alice's mother changed not only our summer's plans, but her whole life and mine.

'The message to Mrs. Huntington read, "Your brother Godfrey died unexpectedly last night. Dian leaves for Philadelphia tonight accompanying her father's body." The message was signed, George F. Sheldon, Attorney at Law, Los Angeles, California.

'I pass over the details of the week that followed, the arrival of the daughter, the funeral, and the establishment of Dian Williston in her uncle's family.

'As physician in charge you are entitled to know of whatever facts or circumstances may have any bearing upon this strange dream life and the crisis that now seems imminent in my wife's case.

'A word concerning Dian's father, Mrs. Huntington's only brother, has its place in this confession.

'Up to the time of his sudden death I had heard little and remembered less of this

talented but erratic younger brother, who, half artist, and half student, with a passionate thirst for the mysterious and occult, had been regarded as the "odd sheep" of the family whose pursuit of unusual and useless knowledge had taken him to the far East and led him to the heights or depths of occult learning and powers.

'After his wife's death, when Dian was little more than an infant, he had taken the child with him on his world travels in his search for knowledge, for health and for peace of Soul, and in his own irregular and erratic way, had educated her as his companion and confidant.

'While I do not think he ever made direct appeals to her imagination or intentionally misled her, still it was inevitable that his life and character and temperament, and his studies and associations should leave their impress upon the plastic child mind and woman nature.

'She had scarcely entered the household life and home atmosphere of the Huntingtons, until each and every one of us was conscious of an entirely new element in our midst. Without in the least jarring upon the smoothly

conventional environment, she was still so unlike everything and everybody in that well regulated home that she was at once a novelty and a delight.

'Seemingly without any consciousness of the fact or with the self-consciousness of "precocity", Dian was as unlike other young girls as the lily of the valley is unlike the robust loveliness of the American Beauty rose. By comparison and contrast all other women appeared "earthy", and even Alice's fresh physical beauty lost charm by comparison.

'She entered our everyday conventional world like a fairy princess, almost a child in years, but younger than her years in worldly knowledge and social requirements. Dian was four years younger than Alice and eight years my junior.

'All were dazzled by her exquisite beauty. Both households were made captives on sight. Alice, like myself, had missed the companionship of brothers and sisters and now responded to her cousin's affection with keen delight. Almost immediately she established the elder sister's protectorate, while I became her adorer and slave.

'In a flash of time something in me, wholly unawakened before, sprang into life and the interests, affections and obligations of all my past life were forgotten and I found myself confused in a maze of new impulses, desires and demands. In a day, as it were, Alice passed out of my life, almost out of my consciousness, as Dian entered it, and I was drawn into a new and bewildering passion of possession.

'In the long after years of exile and isolation I have tried to work out the meaning of it all and to measure my own moral responsibility for Alice Huntington's sorrow, for my wife's estrangement, and for my own failure to find happiness. But, even yet, I can not analyze what followed so swiftly my first meeting with Dian, I only know from that hour the whole world changed and all my past contented, light-hearted life was swept off the boards while I became a beggar for this young girl's attention.

'In the brief space of a day and a night I found myself in the wreckage of my old life with its conventional habits and orderly affections.

'My bewilderment at that time may have been the very common symptoms of an unreasonable infatuation, but I had no standards to reckon by nor past experiences to guide me.

'It all developed so rapidly that even the principals were unprepared for the denouement. My sudden and insistent passion made its impress upon Dian and I had drawn her into the bewilderment of a young girl's first fancy before the elder members of the family had observed my infatuation. And, as for Dian, she did not then nor has she ever known the facts concerning my attachment and engagement to Alice. There had been no time to tell her during her first week with us, and after that it was too late.

'Undoubtedly both of us were victims of our own imagination. To Dian, but little beyond the fairy tale age, I seemed the Prince Charming who wakes the sleeping beauty to love and happiness, and for myself this sudden invasion of my calm and commonplace life wakened in me all of the sentiment and poetry of which my nature was capable. Neither of us saw the other as a reality, but as the embodiment of some vague ideal and we were

blindly in love with that ideal. Neither was wise enough to know the real needs of mind and heart.

'I was swept off my feet in this desire for possession, while she, poor child, pliant to my stronger will and impulses, first consented to a secret engagement and then to an immediate marriage. It would be too long a story to tell you how I forced compliance to my wishes and married Dian in such shocking haste after my break with Alice, and after her father's death.

'However, she was held blameless in the matter because of her youth and inexperience and because she was so unlearned in the conventions and had so little knowledge of the world.

'It had all culminated so rapidly and I had made my impress upon her and drawn her into this secret relation before either her guardians or my own parents had any knowledge of it.

'Alice, however, had realized it from the beginning. Her woman's intuition kept pace, it seemed, with every thought of mine away from herself. Amazed and heartbroken, she first

questioned me and then upbraided me for disloyalty, and then, stricken by my cold indifference, she changed over night from the merriest, happiest girl I had ever seen, to a silent, frozen woman.

'The inevitable followed. I had one humiliating interview with Alice's father and mother, and a stormy one with my own, but neither or none of them could change my determination to marry Dian at once, and I finally won out only because I was dealing with very proud people who could not give their family affairs to the public and their social world.

'It would make too long a story to tell you how I forced compliance to my marriage with Dian, which was disapproved by my own parents more sternly than by the Huntingtons. Both families were too proud to run the risk of an elopement, and all concerned were bound by so many ties that any sort of publicity would humiliate and embarrass every one concerned. The Huntingtons gave their cold consent, mainly I know to remove Dian from their home and spare Alice, and to shield Godfrey Williston's daughter, while my own father and

mother had to admit that there was nothing to condemn in the romance itself, but only in this sudden infatuation which had made me disloyal to Alice and brought unhappiness to her and to both households.

'My father closed our conference upon the subject with "You have my consent, but not my approval. Marry as soon as you wish and take up the inexorable law of retributive justice, for I have never known it to fail in the course of a lifetime that the man or woman who trifles with sacred things must in some fashion work out the punishment."

'A week before our marriage Dian told me that Alice was ill, having suffered several fainting attacks, and that the physician had ordered an ocean voyage and that under charge of her father she had been hurried to New York the night before and would leave there for an indefinite trip, on the next steamship out.

'Mrs. Huntington had reluctantly consented to remain at home and preside at our wedding, for it must not be said that anything peculiar had been in evidence at the wedding of a Huntington.

'I had so far forgotten what was due to Alice and so deceived by her light, cold manner following our own unhappy interview that I had not observed her failing physical and nervous condition. In fact, I rarely saw her those days when visiting the Huntington home.

'Engrossed with my beautiful fiance, I allowed all this to pass without any real interest or touch of sympathy, oblivious to everything but my own enchantment, utterly indifferent to Alice, her illness, her sorrow, her departure and possible death.

'It was not until long afterward that the enormity of my selfishness and heartlessness became crystal clear to my repentant soul.

'Society, which is at once so curious, critical, forgetful and easily placated, of course noted the changed relations between Alice and myself, but gave sanction to my marriage as "exceptionally fine" in that my wife was the niece of our old friends and that she was a great heiress in her own right; and the most critical saw nothing to indicate any disturbance of past intimacies, except perhaps the absence of Alice and her father from our wedding.

'With people of our kind no price is too high that must be paid to preserve the family name and dignity, and it therefore followed that our marriage was publicly sanctioned by both families, and the absence of Judge Huntington and Alice was easily and plausibly explained.

'After that I learned that Alice traveled much by water, and spent considerable time abroad for several years, and by the magical tactics in which women are adepts, we did not meet again until the accident to our child brought her to Dian, to save her from death.

'I cannot tell, even now, just when or how I came to the certain knowledge of our mismated relation. My earthly passion for my lovely child wife was so strong that it yielded very slowly to our temperamental differences. But from the beginning as I see it now, I was in a state of protest against her "peculiar" tastes and tendencies, and more and more I tried to win her to my own way of life and thought. This of course became the first cloud upon the blue sky. She was forever trying to explain, or excuse her singular "impressions" of people and things to my

matter-of-fact mind, and I spent considerable energy pointing out the realities of this world and the foolishness of these odd impressions and unreasonable attractions and repulsions.

'I found that she had no real interest in society, nor in the conventional things that make up the life of women like my mother, like Mrs. Huntington or Alice. I discovered that she had not the least concept of, nor interest in my ambitions in my professional life, but on the contrary lost all responsiveness when I would try to hold her attention to my world of thought and occupation. She was often repelled from the people I liked, she could not read the books I most enjoyed and in the field of what we may call "religion" we had absolutely nothing in common.

'When I was twenty and Alice sixteen, we had been confirmed in the same class, in the Episcopal Church, and together we had accepted the authority of the Church in which our parents were consistent members I did not have then, nor have I since had any very vivid sense of what religion really is, but I respected the Church in which I had been reared and I participated in the services with

serious attention and subscribed to the creed without critical analysis.

'In belief I was a conventional Churchman, tacitly acknowledging the authority of the Church, which was for the purpose of defining religion and teaching us morals.

'On the contrary Dian was—no, not irreligious—that is not the word, but she was like those "New Thought" people, "*Spiritual*" I think they call it. That is, she thought much about and liked to talk of the next world and the "higher life" and about God, and the possible relationship of the next life to this, and of men in the body and out of it, and she read books and sought out people that encouraged her strange curiosity, in preference to anything I could attempt to substitute.

'In addition to her youth, immaturity and ignorance of men, of society and of life in the world, Dian was by nature strangely susceptible to everything we call the mysterious or "occult". I do not mean to say that she was superstitious, but merely that her tendency was to clothe the ordinary things of life with mystical meaning, and to rather seek than avoid the thought of death and the life beyond.

'Unintentionally, her father had imbued her with his own bias towards so-called "spiritual things", and his influence and his books and his associates had made a lasting impress upon her character.

'She was never a sad or dull companion, but rather the dreamer and ready to ignore the real and the conventional things of life for the mystical and the fanciful.

'My first uneasiness in this direction occurred on our wedding day, when she lost her father's last gift, a brilliant crystal sphere, which, attached to a long, slender, silver chain, was her only ornament in the nature of jewelry. This she called her "amulet" and I had observed that she held it in her hand much of the time when not occupied with other things and seemed to make it a part of her daily consciousness.

'This she lost the evening of our wedding day on board ship, on the forward deck where we had gone to watch the sunset as we cleared the New York harbor. The chain had parted from the crystal and it rolled away, passing out of sight in the gathering darkness. Her distress was so great that I could not console

her, especially when the reward I offered failed among the sailors who searched carefully for hours.

'The crystal was never found and the incident became to Dian an augury of sorrow or of evil in our wedded life. I have had to acknowledge that after events seemed to confirm her prophecy.

'She would not permit me to replace the lost jewel with a fine one I bought in France, as she claimed that the lost stone was of Oriental find, finish and "charm" and that her father had given it to her saying, "While you safeguard and wear this, in reverence, your life will be spared the great accidents, sorrows and tragedies of life", and the poor child had accepted his sentimental fancies as the fiat of Nature's God.

'Of course I did what I could, and always sought gently and tenderly to educate her into a more practical view of life, and our duty to *this* world and to society and to our material interests, and in so doing of course I punctured many of her vague ideas and beliefs so that she finally ceased to talk of what was to me queer and uncanny.

'I was just at the point of congratulating myself that she was growing out of these tendencies when that terrible accident occurred, and her sorrow invoked that still more terrible dream.

'I think you can understand how, little by little, and with no conscious disloyalty to my wife, I was forced to recall the old perfect companionship with Alice, and how it came about that I would find myself comparing them and regretting that the woman I married did not respond in kind to my intellectual ambitions, my social tastes and habits, nor even to my ideas of religion. Slowly but surely I had to face the truth and to confess in secret bitterness that I had cast off the woman who was my very counterpart in all these vital things and had assumed the burden of "making over" the girl I had married or of living out my life alone.

'Clearer and clearer became the long blurred picture of Alice in her wholesome beauty, her social charm, her practical good sense and her absolute response to every ambition, idea and ideal, yes and even every prejudice of mine.

'If we, Dian and I, had been really mated,

if my wife had loved me in reality, I believe this extraordinary thing could not have occurred or that I could have broken the spell of this tragic dream; but the death of our child instead of drawing us together only furnished the conditions for a gradual drifting apart. Without her knowing it, it was the beginning of the end of our enchantment. It was the beginning of a life suited to her strange temperament, away from earth, in seclusion from society, a life in which I had no part.

'The rest you know, and now, Dr. Haynes, you have my own part in this unhappy drama, if it can furnish you any further light in your search of a solution. The part I have played in the lives of these two almost faultless women is incomprehensible even to myself. It is such a record of love and faith, of infatuation and selfishness, of disappointment and disillusion.

'Whether my affection for Alice was more than a comraderie of similar tastes or my love for Dian more than a fever of the senses I do not know. I only know to a certainty that when this lapse of honor occurred *I knew what I wanted*, but even now I do not know to a

certainty *just what I needed.* At that time I was so far lifted out of my normally even life and normally quiet affections that it was another kind of man who betrayed the woman who loved him and married one whose love and desires have been fixed upon an unsubstantial dream.

'During these long after years of travel, isolation and disappointment, I have tried to work out to my own satisfaction my own responsibility for Alice Huntington's cheated life, my wife's abnormal experience and my own failure to find peace and content.

'Of the three, Alice alone has made a success of life. She did not marry, nor ever again take up the society life. I have seen her but twice in these eighteen years, and then only when she came to serve us in our distress, but I know, however, of her beautiful life in the world, and how she has been using her wealth and influence to serve other women, the working women of the great cities of New York and Philadelphia. She remained at home, the companion and comfort of her parents and still found time to identify herself with the progressive life of today and has

supplemented other splendid women in making this old world a better place to live in.

'Thus, by the strange irony of fate, Alice has gone on developing into my matured ideal of a woman, and I, in the bitterness of exile and defeat, can but dream of what life had been, if I had remained true.

'And now', said Varien, with that dropping of the voice which means "conclusion", 'I have told you all this thinking it might furnish you, who are an expert "psychologist" some possible clues to the extraordinary mental state of my wife, and that you might be in a position to better advise me and serve her, for, if she lives, and if it is your best judgment, I would consent to anything, even complete separation, if that might restore her to her rightful place in the world.'

Before I could reply, Varien arose, preparing to leave the roon, then, turning, with his hand upon the door said, and this in his own whimsical manner with the little half smile that made his face so charming, 'After all, Doctor, who knows but what some of these Modern Cult fellows may be right in their notions about soul mates? Who knows but

what there may be a grain of actual truth in that "scientific formulary" you were reading the other day to Dr. Doran, from one of those queer books? If I remember it ran something like this: "*There is a principle in nature that impels every entity to seek vibratory correspondence with another like entity of opposite polarity.*"'

And before I could reply he had opened the door and passed out quietly.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WATCH

ALL that day and the next we closely followed a prearranged plan for studying the case. At no time, even for a moment, was Mrs. Varien left alone, or even to the care of the trained nurses. Either the doctor, her husband or Miss Huntington was stationed in her private parlor, adjoining the room in which she now remained.

She failed visibly from hour to hour, and made no further attempts to sit up. She would lie for hours, without fever, painless, asking no questions, talking but little, and her sad, sleepless, questioning eyes taking little note of what was passing about her.

She was, however, gentle and tractable, and answered willingly and intelligently all inquiries, though it was plain that this insomnia alone must soon prove fatal.

When questioned, there was no reserve or annoyance in her manner; on the contrary, she seemed eager to assist us. As best she could, she explained to us the mysteries of this dual life, giving us without hesitation her physical sensations and her mental conclusions.

We now almost despaired of producing sufficient sleep to materially aid her. Bromides were of no more avail than water; opiates she continued to refuse.

It was upon her own suggestion that a piano was brought to her private parlor. Varien was not a great, but he was a good performer. His accuracy and delicacy of touch were quite astonishing and betrayed a finer vein of feeling than I had credited him with. During the years of exile and seclusion, he had found music the solitary bond of sympathy between them, and his familiarity with Schubert, Chopin and Mendelssohn was evidence of her taste, I fancied, rather than his own.

His music was worth more than all our prescriptions. In the darkened room, with these low, plaintive harmonies thrilling the

shadows, the tired patient would seem to rest, and be soothed into momentary snatches of sleep, sleep that only tormented her with its sorrowful vision and returned her to waking life in renewed suffering.

It was a most unhappy condition. By a strange perversion of a husband's prerogative, Frank Varien had only the power to transport his wife from one phase of torture to another.

After one of these brief and unsatisfactory rests, Mrs. Varien said to me, in answer to some inquiry concerning the dream child: "My Stella is as dear to me, as real to me, as are the living ones of your household; dearer, perhaps, for my dream child has no taint of earthly sin. All these years have developed nothing but purity and unselfishness of character. You must remember that to me she is alive, and that she has come to womanhood in even a closer relation to me than exists between the average mother and daughter. She has been such a creature of light, such a perpetual joy, and the world in which she has lived has been so full of delight, that the thought of her

death, and of banishment from that life, is more than grief. It is despair."

After a short pause, the dreamer continued: "I should not have said dying; dying is not the word, for in the sense we know it, my darling cannot die. Somewhere beyond that awful mist that now gathers about her, my star of hope will still shine on. I know this wonderful life is not a dream. I know that I have lived two real lives; and yet," her voice trembled, "I have no tangible proof of this, even to my waking self. Never yet have I been able to bring out of dream life one sign or token of its existence. There is, I know, but little to distinguish me from ordinary lunatics, but that my Stella lives and I have been with her nightly for sixteen years, my own soul stands as witness, and I feel assured," and how her dark eyes burned, "that through some divine and beautiful law, and for some great purpose, all this has been given to me."

Fred looked at me significantly. Varien rose and quietly left the room.

"Madam," I said, drawing nearer, "would

you permit me to feel your pulse and take your temperature?"

"Certainly," she replied, with something like a smile. "I am as eager as yourself that science should unravel this mystery, and secure a better knowledge of the law. I dimly know that in my hands is the tangled skein of some eternal truth. Such an experience as mine is not the work of blind chance, nor of any physical disorder. Order does not come out of disordered machinery, nor are the beings with whom I have associated so long, the creatures of an incoherent fancy, of a mad woman's brain."

Then, turning to me suddenly, the speaker exclaimed:

"I am not insane, and you doctors know it. Intuition tells you this; and even under the technical rules of your science, you cannot brand me a creature of disordered intellect."

A thorough examination of the patient was now made. Want of sleep and the consequent strain was rapidly wasting her body. Her face was very pale, and the keenness of her mental suffering veiled every feature.

Yet there was not a trace of fever, nor any pain. She was neither restless, nervous, nor irritable; and her eyes, shining with a clear, mild radiance, spoke of heaven rather than of insanity.

"Do you believe me insane, Dr. Doran?" The question came directly.

I was in for it. I glanced at Fred's impassive face, then at Varien's, eager and appealing, as he now re-entered the room; then I answered slowly, as I did honestly.

"So help me heaven, madam, I believe you are as sane as I am, or the others in the room."

"Thank God," was all she said, but I turned away that I might not see the tears in her eyes.

I was not sorry I had rendered such a decision, and yet I felt like a child who half fears it has been tricked into the acceptance of something it does not approve.

"You accept, then, this theory of double life?" said Fred quizzically when we were alone.

"I have no opinion whatever as to that," I replied sharply, "as I have never had the

opportunity of studying the dream world as has this woman. I have only theory to offer against her experience. If you dare admit a soul separable from the body after death, how will you go to show that it may not occasionally slip the traces during life?"

Though watching her cousin with unaffected concern, Miss Huntington yet found time to discuss the matter with the doctor and myself, and to probe our medical knowledge with her clever questionings. I observed that in her orthodoxy the lady much resembled Varien. She was a good churchwoman, but while holding an unquestioned faith in the scriptures with its long record of celestial and terrestrial communication, she yet regarded it as sacrilege to even suggest that the communication of the seen and the unseen may have continued after St. John's vision on the Isle of Patmos.

"Still, she is not insane," declared this generous woman. "She is only unfortunate. Of course her notion as to the reality of her dream is the veriest nonsense; yet, let any of us recall some of our own vivid dreams, we can understand how, if they were re-

peated, the same effect would be produced upon our minds. I believe yet that she will recover, for," and the speaker's voice quivered, "I have prayed so earnestly for her happiness all these long years, surely God will hear me."

"And where will her happiness be found, in this world or the next?"

It was Varien, who, entering the house unperceived, had asked the question that had flashed into my own mind.

There was almost a touch of resentment in his voice, while the lady, flushing, then paling, rose and, with some hurried excuse about "going to Dian," hastily quitted the room.

At the doctor's suggestion, we were now occupying chambers connecting with the suite occupied by Varien and his wife. To provide against any aggravation of her condition from without, every patient had been temporarily removed from that corridor. Nothing of the outside world, nothing but the subdued roar of the city and a patch of dull November sky, now reached the ears and eyes of the dreamer.

In this way, with unremittent watching and care, passed the two following days, with an increased anxiety on our part and rapid loss of vitality to the patient. The insomnia could not be reached, and the brief snatches of sleep were now hurtful rather than comforting to the unfortunate woman.

The morning of the tenth arrived, and the better portion of it passed as uneventfully as did the preceding ones. It was not until the setting sun made "golden water on the wall," that a break occurred in the wearisome vigil. Since morning Mrs. Varien had lain quietly, making no attempt to lift her head from the pillow. She spoke rarely and not above a whisper, and she had entirely refused either food or the simple sleeping draughts ordered.

All day she had lain like a figure cut in marble, so deadly still, so tranquil of expression, and her eyes steadily fixed upon the patch of sky showing through the westward window.

It was, as I said, just at sunset, when she spoke voluntarily for the first time since noon.

"Frank, dear," it was a mere whisper, but Varien was bending over her in an instant; "Play for me, I am going to sleep."

His face brightened, and a moment later Dr. Haynes was alongside the bed with a partly filled wine-glass in his hand. By a pre-arrangement with Varien we had agreed to deceive her, and at this crisis administer an opiate if possible.

"If we carry her over this fatal date, and leave her to suppose this blank was the natural end of the dream, we may save her," the doctor had explained to Varien.

"Mrs. Varien," said Fred gently, and he approached the sick woman, with the glass, "I would like you to take this preparation of beef and wine; you seem inclined to sleep, and a little nourishment will extend your rest;" and he would have raised her head from the pillow.

A curious expression came upon the woman's face. There was a strangely reproachful look in her eyes.

"And you would give me an opiate?" looking the doctor directly in the eyes.

There are times when a white lie is neces-

sary in a sick room, and Fred evidently regarded this as one of them.

"Do you think I would deceive you?" His reply was evasive, almost sheepish.

"Pardon me" — the tone was one of exhaustion — "but I will take nothing before I sleep;" saying which she turned again to her husband, as if there had been no interruption.

"Not what you usually play, Frank, dear. To-night I have a fancy for hearing the old-time songs and hymns, those we sang together long ago, before Doris went away; and the lullaby, Frank, the one baby liked; you remember how we used to sit and sing her to sleep at twilight. I want to hear all this music once again.

"Once again, and as often as you will, dear wife," said Varien, kissing tenderly the delicate hand he held in his own, and he smiled in her face, but there were tears in his eyes as he rose to do her bidding.

"And, Frank." It was the woman's hesitating voice.

"Yes, Dian."

"Should I go to sleep — and — and — not — waken again."

"Hush, Dian, you must not — but there — I will not distress you. Sleep if you can I will play for you, and with every note I'll send a prayer that the angels bring you back to life, to health and to the real joys of a real life."

The man's face was very tender. He turned impulsively, and, with one quick sob, lifted the frail creature, his first love, in his arms, and kissed her once, one long, silent pressure upon the lips. Then he laid her gently down, and hastily quitted the room.

"Nature must take its course," observed Fred quietly, when I had called him aside and referred to the unsuccessful attempt to administer the patient an opiate: "It is a most exasperating condition, and I am beginning to think it a pretty serious one for the woman." Then the doctor, suppressing his desire for discussion of the case, put on his professional mask, and seated himself near the window, and directly facing the bed upon which the woman lay.

Miss Huntington had remained by her

cousin the entire day, and now having rearranged the pillows, and added those little comforting touches that come only from a woman's hand, she again seated herself by the farthest side of the bed, and turned her face from us and from the lingering western light.

Presently, and it seemed that the hour and occasion lent inspiration to the player, there fell upon our ears a rare outbreathing of sacred memories. The early twilight thrilled with the spirit of days that were no more. Home, Sweet Home, played the wanderer, and then a cradle song, a simple measured melody, suggesting even to a wifeless, childless man the possibilities of joys he had never known. The Old Oaken Bucket, Bonnie Annie Laurie and the Last Rose of Summer, flowing softly in deep, grand chords, called up such visions of home, of father and mother and sweetheart, and of hopes long since dead, that this chain of familiar melodies seemed a procession of ghosts, crossing and recrossing the shadows of the night.

It was probably the circumstances of the

the hour, or, possibly, my physically weary condition; yet I seemed distinctly to hear each refrain taken up by an invisible chorus, and re-echoed back from that mysterious shore. Life for a moment lost its hard realities. It became a song; there was no discord; existence was peace.

Twilight deepened, night came on, and still the music breathed softly through the darkening chambers. The strong, bearded face of the doctor, and the white, still figure on the couch, had been quite swallowed up in darkness, when the last appealing strains of Abide with me, floated upward to the Great Invisible.

Then came silence, the player having stopped from sheer weariness. He had been sitting at the piano nearly two hours, as we noted by the clock when a light was hastily turned on and shaded.

The woman was asleep. Involuntarily we three men drew near the couch and looked curiously upon the—shall I say sleeper, or the body of a woman whose conscious soul was traversing an unknown world. Here again I observed the rigid limbs, the dead

face and pulseless veins that had so startled me before. The skin was as cold as that of a corpse, and a glass held over the lips revealed no sign of the breath of life.

"She is not dead," said Varien, "and if she ever wakes she will have something to tell us; we may count upon some extraordinary revelation."

Varien, in previously speaking of this phenomenon, told us that Sir Allen Manderson had pronounced this a trance condition, and added: "Curiously enough, my wife told the Englishman of her dream, which he accepted apparently as a matter of scientific fact. He gave me a warning, however, concerning this sleep, that was as unintelligible to me as the rest of that philosophy. He explained how the astral body leaves the physical body, traversing space at will; but he claimed that the two selves, or the ego and body, continued joined by an invisible thread, called the astral cord. Should this invisible thread be broken by any accident or any intermeddling by others, he said, the soul and body are cut off from each other,

and death ensues. The soul could not return.

Though this at first struck me as highly absurd," continued Varien, "yet I was frequently aware that I had for years maintained over her the very vigilance he had recommended."

It must have been somewhere between six and seven o'clock before the music ceased. After this, none of us left the apartment, but, satisfied that it did not disturb the sleeper, we fell into a low-toned conversation, we two physicians taking but enough part to encourage Varien to further disclosures concerning his wife's strange case.

Up to this time, all that had been said related to the child; now, however, he amplified the romance by descriptions of other vague personages, and especially were we entertained with evidences of the transcendent wisdom and grace of one whom he called the Master, the "Nameless One"—he who had been named Zanoni by Mrs. Varien. I may have been mistaken, but it seemed that, in speaking of him, there was a tinge of bitterness in Varien's voice, as if

he cherished an unconfessed jealousy of this spiritual counsellor and guide.

It was all so unreal and absurd, that I regarded Fred's interest and my own as particularly childish. Varien's familiarity with his wife's vagaries somewhat explained his earnestness in discussing these dreams of ghosts, but for the doctor's and my own eagerness for details there seemed no excuse.

Common-sense rejected the entire phenomena, and yet, we two elderly men—mere victims of imagination — sat like children listening to servants' tales of bogies and broom-stick-riding witches. However, the spell was upon us, and as we sat in the dim room, listening to the fragments of this poetic other life, I think, for the moment, we half believed it true.

The time passed; nine — ten — eleven, had sounded in the mellow chimes from the mantel clock. The woman had not moved; the long, ghastly sleep was making good her prophecy.

Since we had first looked at her under the softly shaded lamp, the rigid sleeper had

not stirred. There had been no perceptible flutter of the pulse, nor the least softening of the tense lines of the face.

Conversation gradually dropped off; each of us seemed absorbed in his own speculations. Fred maintained his watch from the window, while Varien paced softly and slowly through the two large chambers. It was close upon midnight, when, by a common impulse, both Fred and I arose, Varien joining us, and we then gathered in a semicircle near the head of the bed. In absolute silence we gazed upon the beautiful, deathlike face, and noted the delicate laces that lay unmoved upon the woman's bosom. What were we waiting for? Which of us could have put into words the vague possibilities that were haunting him?

The half hour before midnight had struck, the minutes were speeding on, and yet no sign of life came into the face or form of the sleeper. Yet even in that fearsome sleep, this strangely tortured woman was beautiful. Neither time, nor grief, nor pallor of death, could rob her of this inheritance. Though the face upon the pillow was mar-

ble, it was marble exquisite in chiseling, and noble in the purity and patience of its lines, and the slightly waving, ruffled masses of her dark hair made a striking frame for this most striking face.

Ten minutes of twelve! Dr. Haynes leaned forward. He laid his finger upon the woman's wrist, and did not remove it. In his right hand he held his opened watch.

Varien, as well as myself, comprehended the significance of this act, and he, wrought upon by an interest more vital than our own, turned pale as the sleeper, and stood dumbly, waiting for the solution of this psychological problem.

Six minutes of twelve! Still the same dead face and rigid form. Five—four—three—two minutes of twelve.

Two minutes of twelve! We three exchanged quick glances of disappointment.

Then a wonderful thing occurred, none the less amazing because the dreamer had foretold some such event and we had been half expecting it.

On the instant, the body of the woman seemed to have been shocked, struck by

some suddenly precipitated force; then, so swiftly following as to seem a result of the blow, a strange, dreadful shuddering seized upon the entire frame, and seemed to thrill every muscle of the body and rend every fiber of flesh. Then it ceased as it came, in a flash, and through the icy limbs swept back the tumultuous life-blood from its unlocked sources, the pulse beat strong and full, the throb of the heart was distinctly felt, and the white face flushed into rosy tints as the limbs settled into natural and easy lines.

The woman lived again. The miracle of a resurrection seemed to have been enacted.

One minute of twelve! The wonder increased. Still lying with closed eyes, and partly in the bondage of sleep, the woman yet raised her free hand from the cover, raised it high above her head, waving it as in farewell. Then she smiled and her lips moved.

The bed stood well out from the wall. The marble clock on the opposite mantel stared us directly in the face. It wanted

now but half a minute of midnight. The doctor, whose finger remained upon the pulse, never removed his eyes from the watch he held in the other hand.

We held our breath in an intensity of interest. The hand of the clock was hard upon twelve. At this instant there flashed a strange, unearthly smile over the dreamer's face. Her lips moved again, and we now heard her distinctly say, still waving her hand, "Wait for me; it is for all eternity."

CHAPTER VII.

THE VOICE OF THE MASTER.

TWELVE o'clock. Dian Varien opened her eyes. She looked about her for an instant, then at us with a puzzled sort of an expression, which soon gave way to one of recognition. Then, brightly, in a strong, natural voice:

"Ah! I have slept, and you have watched. I am so glad to find you all, for I have so little time to stay."

"Why, Dian, dear, so little time; what do you mean?" The old hopeless look again settled into Varien's eyes. "You have been away for hours, but now that you have come back we intend to keep you. You have had such a glorious sleep; surely, dear, the spell is broken. You look so well and happy. Why, Dian, you are surely better?" He tried to speak cheerfully.

"Better," she repeated lightly; "not better, Frank, but well." And to our amazement the apparently dying woman raised herself, sitting up without a supporting arm or pillow.

"Frank, dear," pressing her husband's hand in both her own, "and you, also," turning to Fred and myself, "please give me your attention. I have much to tell you; a wonderful story to relate, an explanation and confession before I go. My time is short and I must talk straight on."

"What do you mean, Dian?" exclaimed Varien, and he regarded her apprehensively, as if at last his fear had been realized. Fred looked at me inquiringly. "Surely you are better," continued the distressed husband; "you look more like yourself than I have seen you for years."

"It is only that I am myself." What a ring of exultation was in the woman's voice. "I have found my lost self, and I must follow where it leads. No, dear; do not look grave or protest. What is, is right. I have heard the call, and have chosen to follow. All is well with my soul to-night."

The husband was silenced. He bent his head submissively.

"Frank," and her deep eyes turned tenderly upon him, "I feel that I must say something before these two gentlemen, something in justice to you, something in recognition of your life-long sacrifice. Hush, dear; I must speak while I may. Innocently, it is true, yet cruelly, have I misdirected your life. I have led you from the sunny fields you loved, into shadowy and uncongenial paths. Do you think I have been unconscious of your disappointed ambitions, your baffled hopes and aspirations? Years ago we voluntarily laid upon ourselves these mutual obligations; and, suffer as you might, you were too generous to loose the tie, and leave me to the care of strangers. To your high ideal of duty you have lived faithfully, and that you have yearned for life and love, as they seemed good to you, has been no fault of yours. I have read your soul and have understood its silent, bitter sense of loss. But all this is done; the sacrifice is ended. I go myself to freedom, and give back your own to you."

Then we four, lately watchers around a death-bed, stared at each other in amazement. The ghastly, helpless, dying woman of an hour ago had vanished. A fresh, radiant creature, touched on the instant with youth and health and hope, looked into our faces with bright, unwearied eyes, and in a voice vibrant with some strong emotion continued to speak, with a peculiar enthusiasm and with great rapidity.

"I have again walked in the summer-land, and the truth and the law have been revealed." Again the strange, triumphant smile swept over her face. "You must know," and her words rang with the fullness of conviction, "that between the visible and the invisible, between earth and heaven, rolls no impassable gulf. All life is one and inseparable, all truth is one and indivisible. There is no death, there is only transition. There is loss nowhere, there is only development. Life is continuous as it radiates from its infinite sources; as it projects us from, and recalls us to, its central fire. We dwell in the potential forces of the universe; we are an inseparable part of all heat, motion

and intelligence, and we live through time and eternity. We are immortals, and our inheritance reaches beyond the stars. Immortality is a fact. There are no empty spaces in nature. The universe is pulsing with conscious life. Man lives upon the planets, spirit traverses space, but God is everywhere."

It was wonderful. Every trace of physical and mental suffering had gone from the woman's face. It seemed some bright, expectant girl, who now talked on with steady eagerness, like one performing some allotted pleasant task.

"I have seen our Stella, for the last time, in dreams," and she turned to her husband; "our star of hope is now shining in some brighter constellation. Neither the flesh-encumbered souls of men, nor the earth-bound spirits of the dead, may rend that awful veil of light. She is among the pure in heart; her eyes see God."

Pausing for a moment, Mrs. Varien touched to her lips the glass of water offered by the doctor, and then, as if conscious of some

pressure as to time, she again spoke, hurrying forward in her astounding recital.

"When I went to sleep at sunset, lulled to rest by the dear old melodies, my spirit re-entered dream-land, but dream-land changed and unnatural. I found myself in strange surroundings, yet inexpressibly majestic and imposing. In the distance loomed bleak and unfamiliar mountains. They were swathed in purple shadows and capped with snow. Wide valleys, sterile tracts of land, lay in the shadow of the mountains; while before me, and washing in upon the gleaming sands, rolled a boundless sea. Over all hung an empty, sunless sky. This new world was empty of sound and of life. On neither land nor sea was moving any living thing. No sail showed upon the waters, nor did any bird skim the waves or mount the desolate sky. There was not a breath of wind from the sea, and the tide surged soundless upon the level sands.

The light in which this lonely world seemed sleeping was that of neither sun nor moon. It was terrific. The unearthly beauty and awful loneliness of this weird

country made me afraid. Without knowing why, without conscious exercise of reason, I covered my face with my hands, and, falling upon my knees, shrieked, 'Zanoni.'

I cannot describe to you the instant transformation within myself. Fear was annihilated. The empty, sullen world of silence and of twilight throbbed with life, light and music. I no longer stood upon the narrow bar of shifting sand. I was now upon a mountain top. Sun-bright waters sparkled far below. The fertile valleys bloomed with flowers and fruits and ripened grain, and brilliant birds went trilling through the fragrant air.

Yet, standing there, upon that awful height, I felt no fear, for I was not alone. He upon whom I had called was beside me, and in his calm, majestic face, I read my own security.

Under the light of the Master's eye I trembled with some vague, new hope. His hands were extended to me in welcome, my entire being thrilled with the ecstasy of perfect peace.

You already know of him, the great Zan-

oni, and how, when he was Stella's first instructor, I learned to lean upon his strength, and gather courage in the wisdom and beauty of his counsel. As I have told you, he is neither old nor young. The man of flesh, or that which represents flesh, is yet in the prime of manhood, according to our life. Yet the fire that burns in those wonderful eyes was kindled by the wisdom of the ages. It was purified by a love that is infinite.

Years ago, when first I saw this grave, sweet stranger, first listened to his voice thrilling with tenderness, and to his words eloquent with truth, I dimly felt that all the mysteries of life had been laid bare, all questions answered, all riddles solved, all paths made clear.

I but vaguely comprehended his high calling, yet I felt this Nameless One must be a wanderer from some celestial sphere. He seemed like one descended from loftier planes of being for the accomplishment of some great purpose. To all unspoken thoughts of mine this gentle Seer would answer. The very spirit of my highest aspirations he seemed to understand, and

taught me they were bright glimpses of the truth. In his daily life my highest conceptions of manhood were revealed. In him were hourly exemplified the principles of the justice, compassion and charity he taught to others. Reaching, as he did, my highest ideal, this man or god became my tower of strength, and my hope for all good to come. My faith in Zanoni became one with my faith in God. Zanoni was the path that led to God.

It was he who taught me that dream life was real life, and that the astral world was no more a world of illusion than the material world in which we live. It was he who expounded the law, and painted, in language no mortal can translate, the unchangeable glories of the higher life.

You will remember that Zanoni came to us at the completion of Stella's tenth year, and while he imparted to her such knowledge as the mind of a child might assimilate, yet I was conscious that it was less for her instruction than my own that he had exiled himself from some fairer and purer realm. My own little child became the medium of

my instruction, and all that he so clearly and simply taught the little one, I observed with gratitude and delight. Does it appear unnatural that the mortal woman could comprehend no more of spiritual law than the immortal child?

He seemed always alone,—this grave, gentle Master,—rarely mingling with others; not prideful and exclusive as we know these terms, but isolated from his very weight of knowledge. His entire bearing, at once majestic and tender, was touched with the splendid humility of such as have 'seen those things of which it is not lawful to speak.' His speech had the direct simplicity of a child; his expression, the benignity of a god.

But once during all these years of acquaintance had I heard him refer to his earth life. It was one day after a successful experiment in teaching our Stella how to command certain elements for materialization. I had marveled at his mastery over these disintegrated and scattered substances, when, with the smile so rarely seen upon his pale, gentle face, he said to me: 'And yet

I wandered for long years among the shadows of earth, seeking the one element to complete the most divine experiment in nature.'

'You failed; you did not find it?' I asked in open amazement, for his knowledge and control of the law seemed absolute.

'Not then,' he answered softly, his deep, tranquil eyes looking for a moment into my own; 'but I know now where that precious essence is stored, and one day, one perfect day that is to come, I shall be permitted to gather it, and to live in the light of its beauty forever.'

I questioned no further; his expression silenced curiosity. I did not comprehend, but my soul was satisfied; and, ever after, even that ideal world pulsed with a new atmosphere of delight.

It was this great friend who now stood beside me, who spoke to me, and whose words I am instructed to relate.

At the first sound of his voice, the brooding silence and shadow of this sunless world had vanished. The chill fled from the air. The cold, gray mists beyond the mountains

turned silvery white, and floated lazily across the arching blue. A breeze fragrant as roses, and light as a mother's kiss upon her baby's cheek, stirred the golden grain and caressed the flowers springing at our feet. It breathed upon us softly; it played with the edges of Zanoni's flowing robe, and lifted the soft locks that lay upon his white brow.

'You have called and I am with you.' These were the words which, falling upon the empty air, had filled all space with sound and light and beauty.

Reaching his hand to me, and smiling encouragement to my terrified soul, the Master bade me rise and look upon the world.

On the instant, fear died, and I sprang to my feet, drinking in the beauty of my surroundings with quick exclamations of wonder and delight; but, as I gazed, the bright world that had seemed to flash out at sound of his voice, was suddenly veiled in white mists. From the sea and the valleys there suddenly rose a wall of impenetrable fog. Clouds, soft, yet dense and dull, overswept

the brilliant sky. Only the mountain top upon which we stood remained visible in the heart of this fearful cloud. In a vast and shadowy cell we two were prisoners.

But I had heard the voice of the Master; I could see his face; my hand lay lightly in his own.

'I fear no evil, for thou art with me.' These words I involuntarily uttered. Though both the worlds I had known seemed to have been swallowed up, yet never before had I realized the completeness of the universe.

'Faith commands light.' It was the Master's voice; and, as he spoke, the almost sad serenity of his usual expression changed to one of uncontrolled joy. 'You have done with the shadows; lift up your eyes and from henceforth dwell in the light.'

Even while he spoke the gray world paled and whitened. The sodden fog became a cloud of steamy vapor, and presently a luminous mist was all about us, which, growing brighter and brighter, like a brilliant veil hung between us and all things else."

CHAPTER VIII.

A STAR WAS SHINING.

SAID the Master, answering at once my wondering look:

'This meeting, here and now, so strange to you, so glorious to me, is but the finish of a weary race. It is the splendid consummation of Nature's grandest purpose. It is the end of travail and unrest.'

'What lies beyond that veil?' I asked, trembling with eagerness, for I was seized by a great longing to penetrate the shining mist.

'Would it please you, then,' he asked, 'to look upon the planet we call home, and somewhat acquaint yourself with the atmosphere in which we move during our experience as mortal men and women?'

Curious as to his meaning, and eager for what he might have to teach me, I bowed assent, and, following the motion of his

hand, directed my gaze toward the veil, which hung glittering above and before us. There was now a tiny rift in its whiteness; a rift that slowly widened to a great dark cloud; a window, as it were, opening out from this snow-white castle into shadows of twilight.

Everywhere was shadow, boundless shadow; while far below, in miniature copy, rolled the teeming ball we call the world, and I saw the oceans and dry land, and the mountains, and the rivers sweeping seaward from their sources.

I saw the valleys and ripening harvest, and the purple, clustering grape. I saw the fruits and flowers, and all the tender growing things, turning sunward for their strength. I saw the precious ores and sparkling gems that lay hidden in the earth, and the gleaming pearls and branching corals that glorify the somber ocean-bed.

'Listen,' said Zanoni; and there came to our hearing low, rhythmical sounds,—sounds that gradually rose and swelled to a grand volume of harmony.

Said the Master, answering my wondering

and delighted exclamations: 'This is Nature's music. That first low murmuring you heard, was but the rippling, rhyming undertone of the tiny rivulets and brooks, of growing grass-blades and the bursting buds. To this was added the chanting of the forests and the rivers, the music of the winds, and the voices of the mighty waters. Yet high over these, but too subtile a harmony for mortal ears, rolls the "music of the spheres." It is a fact,' he continued, 'and not a poet's dream, that Nature moves to music, and that every growing plant breathes harmony. It is a splendid truth that the morning stars do sing together, and that every wheeling, circling planet joins in this song celestial.

'Look,' said the Master; and now my eyes were strained, fixed upon the swift-revolving earth, and I saw the cities builded by man, and the land dressed in a thousand devices of his art and cunning. I saw the myriads of men and women and the hosts of little children that live upon this thinly-crusted globe of molten fire and poisonous gases.

What a strange inharmony it appeared.

What a fantastic jumble of feasting and dancing, of toiling and delving. What a pathetic picture of loving and suffering and hating. Everywhere walked those twin miracles of being—Birth and Death. Death snatched its victims, regardless of merit or age or condition; and the gap made by Death, Life filled up with new-born infants; while the world, heedless alike of the loss and the gain, struggled on laboriously, painfully, breathlessly,—after what?

'Listen,' said Zanoni; and I again heard sounds.

'You have heard the voice of Nature, now listen to the sounds of Life,' he said; and there rose a great noise above the hurrying tread of these human hosts. There were millions of sounds commingled to a mighty roar. Above the frightful discord were but two sounds distinguishable to my ear. I could hear the ceaseless chink of gold; I could hear the steady rain of tears. Gold and tears: but never a sound of laughter, nor a song of thanksgiving.

Answered the Master, reading my thought: 'Yes, there are some notes of gladness rising

from the earth, but they are lost in this mightier volume of greed and of sorrow. Now,' he continued, 'observe more closely; you have not yet seen all.'

Again looking earthward I saw the great globe slowly disappearing. It was swathed in fearful shadow. Over and around it was drawn a thick veil of darkness, and through this murky atmosphere came faintly the sounds of Life.

Gazing intently, I was amazed to see this hideous twilight peopled with innumerable forms; forms which, fleshless and transparent, shot and circled, or wheeled and darted, confusedly about the earth. No light shone over and about them, and I perceived they were makers of their own darkness; that they constituted the gloom in which they lived. I wondered how men lived and breathed, enveloped as they were under this fearful veil. I looked to Zanoni, who again answered my thought.

'You will no longer marvel that humanity makes such slow progress toward a knowledge of the truth. Poor mortals!' and my companion bowed his stately head, as if he

still suffered from the yoke that rested upon his brothers.

'That upon which you look,' he added, 'is the invisible spiritual atmosphere of the earth. It is the lowest plane of spiritual existence, and it is in the midst of these influences that our brothers and sisters must work out their destinies. For you must know that the millions of spirits in this plane are of the lowest type of spirituality, whose earth life was of such a low grade, mentally and spiritually, that upon their transition to the spirit life they found themselves upon the lowest round, filled with all the old evil desires and purposes of earth life, and with no place to gratify these instincts but upon the earth plane. As a result, these unhappy spirits are attracted earthward by a natural gravitation, and here they exert all their renewed energies to resume their old habits. At every moment these dark ones seek an opportunity to return; and, as "like seeks like," it follows that they most readily influence mortals who like themselves have neither intellectual nor spiritual aspirations. Hence, medium-

ship, spiritualism; those puzzling and distressing phenomena, which have caused so much perplexity among intelligent and good men,—men who could not deny the demonstrations, but who are forced to reject the foolish, disconnected, and too often false and vicious messages from the spirit world.

'You must see that there are millions of vicious spirits in that life, where there is one upon the earth. There are also millions of progressive spirits; but these, by the same law of spiritual gravitation, rise, or are repelled from the earth, as they grow wiser and purer. Now you will understand how difficult it is for man to walk the earth keeping always the company of the higher spirits. You will also realize how great the task, among these liberated ones, of reaching down to earth and exerting their influence upon humanity.

'There are,' he continued, 'as many different grades and kinds of people, and as many minds and opinions, in spirit life as in earth life. There are superstitions there, the same as here; there is ignorance there as here; there is the same disposition to do

evil in that life as in this; and, saddest of it all, these unhappy influences are nearest to the earth. They wait eagerly for the door to be opened by men. They shadow the earth with a power beyond comprehension.'

I could bear no more. I put my hands before my face to shut out the hideous picture.

'Not yet,' said the Master gently; 'you have not forgotten that clouds have silver linings? Look again, beyond the shadow of evil, and read the shining promise that lies beyond that somber belt.'

I obeyed, turning my eyes once more earthward. Sorrow was changed to awe. Gradually the twilight darkness was overlaid with a light as of dawn, until a softly luminous ether shut out the earth and a mantle of light enwrapped the lately dismal world. Still obedient to Zanoni, who continued to urge my close attention, I perceived that this light was but a vast congregation of radiant beings. It was but the emanation from bright, celestial forms, which rose, winging their flight far swifter than the birds, and with a joyful abandon of appear-

ance and movement that proclaimed release from all manner of bondage.

And I saw the faces of these shining ones. They were serene as the light in which they shone; faces from which had faded all earthly greed and passion and sorrow.

Even as I thrilled with the glory of the vision, I heard a voice. Faintly, from down those far, shining heights, it rolled, chanting: 'They needed not the light of the sun, neither of the moon, for the glory of God did lighten it.' These were the grand, familiar words which, echoing in my soul, consumed it with a great desire. In the longing that swept over me, I forgot the marvel of it all, and stretched my arms to them.

'Master! Zanoni! Let us go,' I cried, and would have flung myself from the rock upon which we stood.

The Master smiled; a light, detaining hand lay upon my own.

'Not yet,' he said, 'but all in good time. The desire of your own heart shall one day bridge this gulf that rolls between you and that far, shining country.

'That which you see,' he continued, 'is but the magic picture of reality, and these shining ones, no longer earth-bound by desire, were once but mortal like yourself. It is toward this upper region of the soul that humanity must look for strength. It is through the veil of darkness that these bright immortals reach to save mankind.

'Having thus seen the mystery of light and darkness, you will no longer marvel how, with the ignorance and injustice upon the earth and the cruelty and cunning surrounding it, that mankind fails to see the light beyond. You can now understand how those redeemed from sin, looking down upon this darkness, must weep in pity.

'This that you have seen in the astral light, is but a picture of the orthodox heaven and hell of the Church. You will perceive that these terms mean a condition rather than a place. Or that, by the specific gravity of the soul, it sinks into hell or rises to heaven; the evil still clinging to their former haunts, while the pure in heart rise toward that mysterious and glorious region, where it is said they shall see God.'

The vision passed; the rift narrowed, closing; and again the white veil had fallen between us and all things else. No, not all; for, just before us, like some splendid jewel, blazed a star of such magnitude and brilliancy that even the snowy veil against which it hung seemed dim and dull by contrast.

I turned to Zanoni. My eyes were dazzled by the glory of the star. His eyes met mine; that glance thrilled me with a sudden strange emotion, half hope, half fear.

'Look well,' said the Master, 'for it must soon pass on to an appointed orbit within another and a higher system.'

I again lifted my eyes to the splendid beauty of the wonderful star; that star, ruby-hearted, golden-rimmed. What could this mean? Why was I so strangely impressed?

Said the Seer gently: 'Does your soul not read its message? Look.'

I obeyed. Ah! it was no longer a mere star. I now saw the whirling threads of red and yellow flame, — animate flame, —

conscious light and spirit. The truth streamed in upon my soul. Stretching my hands, I cried, 'Stella!' And then, so close I seemed to touch her, and yet so far I might never hope to reach her, I saw our daughter once again. Framed in the splendor of her own celestial being, she was no longer my living, loving child; but a something impalpable, shadowy and divine, which was slowly withdrawing from me the glory of its face.

Heaven and earth, and darkness of evil had been swallowed up. A dazzling light swept over the star. I was bewildered, blinded. The vision passed, and again there was but the brilliant star shining against the silver mist. In mute wonder and grief I looked up to him who is henceforth my authority.

Said Zanoni, pointing to a rock: 'Sit there and rest, dear heart. Your probation is done. This is the end.'

I bowed in silence, seeing he wished to speak. The star was shining steadily into our faces, and our garments were touched with its mellow light.

Then, drawing nearer to the rock upon which I was resting, the Master, speaking slowly and with infinite tenderness, revealed the mystery of my wonderful dream, and the mystery of his matchless love."

CHAPTER IX.

A STRANGE QUEST.

"LOVE!" It was Varien's voice that broke the silence which had followed the closing sentence of his wife's recital. The woman had paused, as if fearing the effect of her words; and at this sudden exclamation of mingled pain and astonishment, her lovely eyes filled with tears and her face clouded with sorrow.

The husband had started from his chair, pushing her hand from him as if it stung him; then, as if recalling the circumstances and the utterly baseless fabric of her story, he controlled whatever emotion had been aroused. Sinking back wearily, he replaced her hand in his, and seeing her distress, hastened to say: "Forgive me, Dian, dear; for a moment this hurt me; but you, poor child, could not control this dream. It is

no fault of yours that a ghost made love to you; nor would I blame you," here he tried to smile, "seeing he is such a learned shade, if you had loved him in the dream."

"Then you are not angry nor hurt any more?" Her voice trembled.

"No, dear wife; I would be worse than a fool to let this trouble me. But now go on; we are deeply interested. Pray tell me the mystery of it all."

Thus assured of his forgiveness, and again brightening under the recollection of this weird romance, Mrs. Varien eagerly and joyfully began the recital of the Master's story.

"'I was not of your country,' said Zanoni, 'though of your race and people. I was born in England, the son of an English nobleman; and, while yet a lad, removed with my parents to India. I never saw America during my earth life; nor indeed my native land, except at rare intervals.

'From early childhood I was inclined to study, but neither the honors of civil, of religious, nor of military life appealed to me. Unlike most boys, my mind turned in no

particular direction, except the general pursuit of knowledge. My early life thus mainly spent in a foreign land and among heathen customs, was it little wonder that I yielded to the influences of that magical clime and mystic race? Unknown to my aristocratic parents and their small coterie of self-satisfied countrymen, I was gradually drawn from a life of English diplomacy into the close companionship of certain learned heathen, whose philosophy I eagerly absorbed, and into whose religion I penetrated step by step.

'When once I had reached the door of the Temple of Truth, I realized that my own race, the indomitable Anglo-Saxon race, lived upon the very husks of their own religion. Through that pure mystic, the Master Christ, there had been given to this people the grandest revelation of the truth yet come to man; but so misinterpreted had been the divine teaching, so overlaid with the dogmas of the ignorant, that the church no longer possessed its early spiritual understanding of the truth. The blind live in darkness; the dumb must

forego speech. Christ had come again and again to his own, and they had received him not.

'I now learned that spiritual science was an exact science, and demonstrable to him who works within the law. I perceived that spiritual insight, like intellectual power, was a process of education or evolution, and that the soul, like the mind of a man, attains only through patient and untiring effort. I learned that the key to spiritual truth must be earned; that the path to knowledge is long and tedious, and that the road to wisdom has few travelers.

'I learned also that in India, as with us, the masses of the people have prostituted the lofty edicts and sacred symbols of their religion to the selfish instincts and purposes of their hard hearts and ignorant minds. Hence it is that even in that ancient land the pure and noble Masters are compelled to silence, and to separation from the world; and while that country yet remains the secret center of that learned school, it is but waiting conditions which shall transplant the very heart of its energies to the new

world, and habitation of a later and grander race.

'Yielding to a philosophy that offered truths instead of symbols, principles rather than creeds, I was soon able to detect the substance from the shadow of good, Good, I perceived was not material getting or gaining, nor yet a profession of faith. There was nothing good except spiritual growth in knowledge of the law.

'Having become a close student of the secret sciences and a devout proselyte of the Wisdom Religion, I patiently performed the tasks and submitted to the penalties, as had those who taught me, and upon whose wisdom and purity I staked my immortal future.

'More and more I withdrew from the home circle, pursuing daily with increasing delight the truths as laid down by the Masters, the wise ones of earth. I had now come to a point where I yearned to be accounted worthy by men who lived hidden in caves and other solitary places, but men who walked at will that path of bewildering light and loveliness.

'"Knowledge is power." This I had heard repeated again and again among men of my father's circle; but that knowledge was power I had never realized until I heard it from the lips of the Masters, and had seen their demonstrations.

'"Knowledge is power." Studying the laws by which they seemed to work miracles, I, too, laid hold of knowledge; I, also, became invested with power. Having mastered the principles and the methods of applying them, miracles were resolved into the magnificent results of natural law, the effects of spiritual law, of eternal causes. In the process of development I had first to conquer the skepticism of intellect. After this I gained mastery over the physical appetites and desires, and then the truths I had at first accepted only upon faith in the Masters were now revealed by personal knowledge and experience, and I could demonstrate for myself the lofty axioms taught by them.

'I now knew that the great Unknowable of physical science was a mistaken deduction: but that God's great invisible, eluding

the five senses of man, will yield its treasures to the higher faculties of the soul. I saw that death was transition; that it perfected but did not destroy life. I knew that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

'Among the laws taught by the Masters as emanating from the eternal sources of truth, was the first and greatest—the law of love. Not only that overshadowing love of the Creator for the created, nor of man for his brother, but that strangely blended love which is both divine and human, and lies at the root of all earthly happiness,—the love of man and woman.

'This is the law of laws. Love is the secret of creation and all visible power. Love is the core of life. It is the golden cord binding child to parent, lover to his mate, and all to God.

'Thus taught the Masters; and soon my spirit yearned for its participation in that supreme principle. I did not thirst for power; I longed for love.

'To the student of occultism, love is neither an accident, a blunder, nor the mere groveling animal instinct of reproduction.

Within the infinite circle of love is divinity made manifest.

'At last I understood the word marriage. I comprehended the holiness of earthly mating, and my human heart and man's nature echoed the soul's demand for such companionship.

'"Knowledge is power." In learning the law, I had become acquainted with self. I knew my own needs. Knowledge of the law had conferred power; I was now equipped to seek for my own.

'There came a day when my body lay stretched in the cool, dim silence of an Indian cave, the home of the Master who taught me; and he it was who guarded the inanimate clay, while I, the real but invisible man, searched two great continents for my beloved—my mate, and other self.

'"She whom you seek is of your own race and condition, though not of your own country; is nearly of your own age, and has been reared in the line of your own religion, and worldly conceptions of life; and you will know her when you see her."

'Thus proclaimed the venerable Seer, who had gathered the wisdom of earth, not that he

might enjoy love, but that he might impart the law.

'Though he had obtained such knowledge and mastery of all the laws of life and being as rendered him in my eyes a very god, yet he confessed to me the incompleteness of a mortal existence, that had not supplemented knowledge with experience. "It is not enough to know the law of love; loving is the greater gift. The delight of power is less than the joy of loving." So said the Master.

'"For the sake of the truth and the law," further explained my teacher, "have I sacrificed the delights of human love and the pleasures of friendship. For the sake of humanity have I annihilated self.

'"True wisdom, my son, is more than knowledge of the law. It is the completed experience of the soul under the law. Having sought and found your destined mate, you will have doubled every capability of the mind, the body and the soul; and thereafter, as a unit under God's great law, you will become the invincible foe of error and of darkness."

'Thus admonished and encouraged, and

with every pulse of the body, every demand of reason, and every impulse of the soul giving testimony of the law, I prepared for that strange journey; such a quest as few mortals have set out upon, yet one so common in spirit life.

'I searched long; ah! so long. Not as to conventional time, but as to sensation, that only true measurement of time. I neither heeded nor enjoyed the varied and unfamiliar beauties of nature, nor the novelties of race, nor the customs of countries through which I passed. Now thrilling with hope, now chilled with fear, yet ever watchful and eager, I hurried on.

'I was possessed of but one desire, one purpose, one emotion.

'At last I saw her, and that vision has remained as the most vivid picture ever painted upon the memory of man.

'It was sunset on the coast of a strange country. An ocean steamer, just clear of the harbor, cut the red band of reflected western flame, and stirred the smooth waters of the bay into a wake of sparkling rubies. Something, I knew not what, impelled me

to follow that vessel, and to hover restlessly about it during the long hours of the night. Eager, half hoping, half dreading, I prayed for the morning. Longing, yet controlled by a strange and delicious timidity, I dared not invade the sanctity of life within those separating walls.

'As it is the spirit, not the body of a man, which grows impatient, suffers and enjoys, so now I, freed from the physical and visible body, yet suffered all the impatience, dread, and longing, and enjoyed all the sweet hope and anticipation of which embodied spirits are capable.

'Finally the east paled, and faint, rosy lights absorbed the pallid mists. The gray of dawn deepened into the full red and gold splendor of the morning. A fresh wind swept the bright waters. The spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep. At last there was life on the decks of the steamer, but it was an æon of time to the impatient watcher before the officers and crew were re-enforced by the ship's passengers.

'My impatience had now risen to an agony of suspense.

'Now, there were a number of persons walking upon the deck. Circling nearer and nearer, and at last standing in the midst of them, unknown, unheeded and unseen, I impatiently scanned each face, conscious only of that one unmanifested presence.

'Surely she was here; the quick intuition of the soul had not played me false. But where could she be? Why did she not answer my call?

'Despair follows quickly upon overwrought emotion. I turned to go, when, on the instant, there crossed my vision a face that blinded me like a flash of sunlight. It was she, and all my dreams of life and love took tangible form and shape. Beautiful of body, brilliant of mind, white of soul, was the being in whom I recognized my nobler, better self, — my mate for heaven, my wife on earth.

'Drawing still nearer in my transport of gladness, I was fixing her angelic face, making a picture in memory until I should recover my physical body and claim her in the flesh, when suddenly I observed that she was not alone, and that her companion, a

tall, fair and noble-looking young man, regarded her with a caressing tenderness that chilled me to the soul.

'Her voice was very low — I could not catch her words, but I saw the look of confidence in her innocent face, and I saw the adoration in his eyes. Then I heard him speak, replying to some question; and his subdued, yet clear and resonant voice sounded my earthly doom. "Yes, my wife," was what he said to her whom I had come to find.'"

Chapter X.

THE GATES ARE PASSED.

'NEED I say more?' continued Zanoni.

'Ocean, sunlight, love and hope had all on the instant faded from my sight and from my soul. A bride, — the wife of another, — yet mine, mine only; sprung from the eternal sources of being to complete my destiny. Mine — yet found too late. Mine, yet not on earth, or in earthly marriage bond. Mine, but only mine when vision is cleared of the flesh, and we two, in the light of God's great day, there standing soul to soul at last, should know and claim each other.

'This is the law, and from it there is no appeal. Yet I knew that, being mine in truth, her life must turn in time, seeking that which nature had created for her own. I knew that now, however sweet and

pure her life might be, how devoted to all the sacred duties of a woman, wife and mother, that it would still remain an incomplete existence; that somewhere in the unseen recesses of her life she would hide the longing that must come to her. Dreams unrealized, hopes unfulfilled, would haunt her life with him she had so innocently chosen.

'Neither his love and care, nor the children she might bear him, would still that cry, and then, like all mismated, tender souls, she would chide herself for disloyalty. She would endure with patience her cheated life, while I, become wiser in knowledge of self, must walk this earth alone. Such is the law.

'The astral flight was now done. The great steamer rode over the flashing waters unattended.

'How I groped my way back to that lonely Indian cave I never knew, but the instinctive law of love must have driven my miserable spirit back to the earth she would still inhabit.

'After this I was ill, dangerously ill, lying

for days in strange delirium, and when health and strength came back, they told me of all the weird fancies of fever; of my disconnected rhapsodies over some beautiful being, of my tears and prayers and pleadings for some lost mate.

'Time passed. I recovered and again moved among the friends of my father's household. I abandoned study, and shunned the retreat of the Masters. I no longer cared to pass the bounds of physical existence; yet I hated life, and the husks it had flung in the face of my heavenly hope.

'Nearly three years from the date of my first meeting her,—years of physical apathy, and mental and spiritual inactivity,—I received my next distinct message from the unseen world.

'"She is in sorrow. Go to her," was the command.

'I roused myself, as from a protracted, deadening sleep; and, swiftly as my swift horse could carry me, I speeded across the old, familiar waste. On through the tall grasses,—on into the deep forest,—on to the hidden cave; where, casting myself at

the feet of the Master, I prayed for admittance where I had once earned the right to enter.

'But the path I had voluntarily abandoned was no longer open to me; the power I had ceased to exercise had become chilled. The winged freedom of the spirit was gone.

'I was now as effectually shut from the higher life, as were those I had once pitied for their ignorance of its glories; I had heard the call, but no longer had the power to respond.

'Between myself and despair shone the benignant countenance of the Master whose teachings I had abandoned. Ever responsive to the cry of re-awakened faith, he now stood at my side.

'Nor was there in his manner any shadow of reproof, after I had brokenly confessed my error, and how, in the weakness of earth-born trial, I had ungratefully flung back the slowly acquired powers of the soul. He heard my story with compassionate interest, after which he assured me that my trial and grief had been duly recognized; that their watchful care for me and for her had never

ceased, and that it was he that had sent me the warning message. "It is time," said the Master, gravely, "that the soul re-assert its supremacy and return to the neglected Path. And since you can no longer travel at will," concluded this generous friend, "I will take the journey, and bring you some account of her. The message I sent you was transmitted through me from one of the Brothers on the other side."

'Having said this, the Seer put off his sandals, laid aside his staff, and dropping upon a bed of fragrant leaves, he composed himself as if to sleep.

'Evening came; the daylight faded, wan twilight deepened, night fell, and the cold stars glittered through the opening of the silent cave.

'The Master lay motionless upon his simple couch, while I, torn by grief, anxiety and useless self-reproaches, kept vigil in silence and darkness.

'The late moon rose, flooding the rude chamber with its silvery light. She was riding high in the heavens when the traveler returned. I was at his side in an instant.

"'What is it? Tell me!" burst from me with all the old impatience.

'The Master, rising slowly and resuming his sandals and staff, as one preparing for a journey in the flesh, said kindly:

"'Have no fear, my son; she is in sorrow, but is still in the flesh. She has suffered much, is ill; but with your aid from this time on, may recover all of her lost joy." And then this gracious sympathizer told me the pathetic story of your darling's death. I say yours, for you must know who this woman was; this bride I lost, this sorrowing mother I had been told to comfort; you must know that she was none other than your own beautiful and angelic self.'"

At this point in her recital of Zanoni's story, Dian Varien paused for the first time, and turning from one to the other scanned our faces, as if prepared for some expression of astonishment or disapproval. Her expression was something unearthly. She did not seem to be a mortal woman, except for the happy tears that glistened in her wonderful eyes. Since she began to speak Fred's eyes had never left her face, while

Varien, who continued to sit close to her bedside, had listened as eagerly as we, though his head was bent forward and his eyes remained upon the floor. He was pale as death, but perfectly composed.

As his wife paused he raised his eyes; then, gently taking her hand in his own, said in a low, tender voice: "Do not stop, Dian, dear; tell us all. You have done no wrong."

At which she smiled; and then, pushing back the soft masses of her long, dark hair she continued the Master's story as if spurred to her task by some urgent, pressing necessity.

"When the Master had said these words he paused, looking into my face.

'Go on,' I said; 'I understand.'

Zanoni drew nearer; the light in his face was indescribable.

'It was the dreadful death of your child, and your almost insane grief that had prompted the call,' he said; 'and when the Master, that venerable seer, had said, in concluding his report of your loss, "Between you and your love are no barriers except your enfeebled

powers. Who wills may scale the heights," then, indeed, I knew that my first duty was to you.

'While as yet your spirit had not wearied of its mistaken bond, your love for your child was the one perfect tie of your existence. Mother-love is unalloyed; it never blunders.

'Admitted once more to the confidence of my superiors, I bent again to the task of reawakening my dulled faculties. For weeks I remained in the dim solitude of the green forest, until, at last, I had again met and conquered all manner of temptation. I crucified the flesh, purified the spirit, and — once again was permitted to pass the somber gates.

'Continuing to follow the unerring law of love that had taught me you were mine, I knew that now, in your sorrow, if not in your joy, your life must need the sustaining presence of him who loved you in the spirit. Though grief for the moment had dimmed all other sense of incompleteness, yet I knew that the loss of your child must hasten this awakening. The little one had made the journey, had been received into loving arms

and been borne from the bed of suffering into a fairer and brighter life. Surrounded by tender friends, guarded by your own sister, she was now feasting her innocent eyes upon the beauties of this strange, new world, and already, forgetful of her agony, was reaching out for the delights presented to her quickened intelligence. All this you could not know. In your somber robes you sat alone, unheeding the little form that again and again came near you: unheeding the tender baby eyes looking up into your face: unconscious of the light caresses that little arms bestowed upon you. You sat alone and would not be comforted, and called your angel dead.

'Then it was, through the strange, sweet processes of love's law, that I was guided to this darkened home, and permitted to whisper consolation to the soul of my beloved. You prayed in your anguish for resignation, and it was my blessed privilege to breathe upon the wounded spirit some fragments of divine truth. Your soul listened, caught these promises of a higher life and a future reunion with your child; and then great floods

of tears washed out despair — hope came back, you lifted your glorious eyes, you smiled again. Existence then became to me a song of thanksgiving.

'I noted with honest sympathy your husband's efforts to draw you from your grief; nor was there any emotion in my heart except pity, when I knew he thought the returning light in your eyes was due to the bond between you and him. In such love as mine there is no room for jealousy, or envy, or bitterness.

'I now lived only in your presence. The demands of the body became more intolerable each day. A sense of duty to my parents, however, continued to drag my unwilling spirit back into the tread-mill of material life, and forced me to sit at their feasts like some unhappy ghost.

'As the son of a rich and titled English diplomat, I had a position to maintain, and certain conventionalities of society to observe. I had duties to perform in the world, so long as I remained in it. From the ancient and honored customs of my father's house, and from the petty exactions

of an artificial civilization, there was no escape. Though the spirit of a man may writhe in the uncongenial atmosphere called society, yet must he present to his fellow hypocrites a serene, unruffled mask of flesh.

'You probably do not understand how this life of asceticism not only sharpens each of the five physical senses but develops the higher sixth sense, that peculiar spiritual faculty which has finally forced its recognition among scientists under the term "mind reading." Through this super-physical sense I was enabled to distinctly read the minds and motives that were veiled under social conventions. I now saw all the evil desires and the coarse and cruel propensities of those with whom I came in contact. Details of past crimes were pictured before me, and I saw the shadows of those to come. Under the trained smiles and polished speeches of beautiful women and brilliant men, I saw the real persons and from too many of them I was forced to turn in honest indignation or with supreme contempt.

'This is the most painful price of knowl-

edge: to live in the world, seeing the naked lives of the men and women who inhabit it.

'Time passed. More and more I withdrew from my father's house, and from the old family relations.

'For me there was now but one life, and that one which was hidden in the dim recesses of the secret cave. Leaving here the senseless, unsightly shell of clay, I, the real lover, would hasten away on the wings of desire, and, hovering near the chair of my sorrowing one, would thrill with the joy of knowing she was mine. When, by some sweet suggestive thought of mine, I had seen those dear eyes brighten, as they involuntarily turned upon their invisible consoler, I was rewarded for days of cruel fasting.

'This life, you will readily see, could not be lived without coming somewhat to the knowledge of others. I had no fear, however, that my real life would be betrayed. These secrets of occult science guard themselves. They defy intellectual analysis, and to mere curiosity they present but a puzzling array of absurdities and impossibilities. Beyond a fear that I had been dan-

gerously fascinated by these hermit dwellers and their mystic doctrines, my family knew nothing; but they conceived a violent prejudice against these alleged priests of Buddha, and exhausted every device and entreaty to win me from the forests.

'My wasted flesh, loss of appetite, and the long, deathlike sleep into which I cast myself at will, excited their fears, and made me the object of an affectionate surveillance which became intolerable. Unheeding my assurances of perfect health, they consulted our physician; finally admitting him to my chamber during one of those sleeps, when the spirit is absent from the body.

'This learned man made an examination, and after pronouncing my condition cataleptic, shook his head with the air of one who imparts but a fragment of his valuable opinion. He was right, but his knowledge of this phase of catalepsy was on a plane with the entire range of medical science. He could diagnose symptoms, but the causes of disease were beyond his rudimentary skill.

'Forewarned of his visit, I had returned

in time to prevent any serious effect from the well-meant treatment that would have been tried at once. As it was, I awakened in the midst of an anxious group of relatives, and when implored by my parents to follow the doctor's advice, I laughingly consented, taking thereafter all the harmless, ineffectual drugs prescribed.

'As might be supposed, there was no improvement in my condition, no building up of the wasted flesh, no change in my erratic habits, no cessation of those ghastly counterfeits of sleep.

'My frequent and unexplained absence from home, an increasing tendency to silence, and a settled distaste for society, could produce but one result upon the loving hearts and practical minds of my entire family.

'One night I found myself a prisoner in my own room, with a big, mild-faced, iron-muscled guard at the door. Dear souls, they thought me mad, and were bent upon saving me from self-destruction. Nothing but submission was left me. Resistance would have but deepened the impression,

and a confession of the truth would have appeared but the ravings of a lunatic.

'This confinement reduced my astral journeys to hours instead of days, as when my body lay guarded in the Master's cave. An extended sleep would have been mistaken for death, by them, and much as I longed to go, I did not dare invite the reality by leaving myself to medical care. Suicide is forbidden to those who pursue our philosophy. Self-destruction is a violation of the law. I suffered keenly through the grief of my own people. My father's sorrow over the wreck of his only son was pitiful, and the tears of my mother and sisters fell continually over this calamity.

'I chafed under the restraint, and it became unbearable. It was no longer possible for me to resume my place in the world and pursue the ordinary vocations of life, and I had now been robbed of that other life where compensation was granted for all the disappointments of this.

'Self-destruction is the chiefest of crimes, and only this knowledge detained me. Man's arbitrary interference with the divinely

appointed evolution of the soul is the most monstrous of errors, carrying with it equally unhappy and enduring consequences.

'This sin against the physical approaches to that which is commonly called the sin against the Holy Ghost, — denial of truth once made manifest to the soul.

'Under this restriction and misapprehension I writhed in spirit, and fretted in this double bondage. Could this growing desire for freedom, this temptation to free myself and them, be reckoned as suicide? My life had practically been blotted from among them. Was it not useful, necessary in another sphere? Must I be condemned as a weakling and a traitor for this mad longing to escape?

'"Not so, my son." It was my venerable Master who spoke, from out the silence and shadows of the night, to the prisoner in his chamber. Again had this great friend heard and responded to my call. This time, however, he was not in the flesh. "Suicide," he continued, "can only occur when man has not perfected his experiences on the physical plane. By previous incarnations and by

this present bent, which led you to our philosophy and crowded the fruits of a lifetime into a few years, you have won an honorable release. By patient study and complete sacrifice you have attained that wisdom which every soul must gather to itself. By enthroning the soul upon the chained desires, appetites and ambitions of the flesh, you have passed from a lower plane; you have finished with probation. The trial is done; come up higher."

'I lay, in the silence and darkness, swooning with new-found peace. I had been judged by the wise and immaculate. I had been summoned among the elect.

'The next morning found me feverishly happy, buoyant and freed from care.

'The household, noting this change, were stricken with terror. Again the kind and foolish old physician was summoned, who, feeling my pulse and looking me over with a critical eye, shook his head and muttered something about fever and the premonitory symptoms of violent mania.

'I laughed gaily, at which my family sobbed as if I were already dead.

'Such a condition could not last. It were unjust to all: even filial love were wasted now.

'Late that night I summoned my father and mother, and imploring that they give me their attention and calmly hear me through, I gave them the history of my mystical studies, my secret life and love, and forewarned them of my speedy departure. Their grief over my supposed loss of reason was terrible, and it wrung my human heart with love and pity. At my repeated and solemn request, I at last obtained my father's promise to investigate for himself, should my spirit leave the body at the exact hour I had named. I instructed him how to reach my earthly teacher, who, I assured him, would satisfy him of my sanity and the truth of my revelation. When all this had been done and I had disposed of all my private fortune and personal belongings, the night was far spent and the hour of my departure was close at hand.

'It was nearly dawn when, with a last embrace and assurance of a happy re-union, I bade my family farewell, and then, com-

posing myself as if to sleep, closed my eyes upon the world of sense and human experience.

'A little later, just as the sun flashed upward in the east, my freed spirit passed triumphantly through the great gates. It passed into Summerland, and there, forever rid of the cumbersome flesh and mortal weariness, it sought and found and remained near its beloved.'"

CHAPTER XI.

A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT.

AGAIN Dian Varien paused in the recital of that remarkable dream, and no one broke the silence. Again she made a hurried examination of our faces, resting her brilliant eyes upon her husband's face as if longing for his approval of what might follow.

Again the man's generous hand was laid upon that of the beautiful woman whom he called wife, and his white, set features relaxed into a half pathetic, wholly tender smile, as he said, "I would know it all, dear; your confidence is very much to me. Have no thought of me; go on with this story of love in dreamland."

A grateful light shone in her dark eyes, and she suddenly raised his hand to her lips; and then, without reply or comment, and with another rapid glance at the clock on

the mantel opposite, she took up the thread of Zanoni's history, and seemed to quote verbatim the marvelous confession of this mystical Master.

"'The night following my physical death,' said Zanoni, 'was the first of your remarkable dream. At this period was begun the most wonderful experiment ever recorded, of the combined forces of the living and the dead, or of embodied and disembodied spirits.

'It was not until I had made the transition and fully entered into spiritual life, that I was informed of a proposed experiment in which you and I were to become central figures. The students outlining this long-sought demonstration of the law were wiser than I, and readily commanded my willing service. Their many efforts and failures of the past they recounted to me, and I marveled at the infinite patience of those who had so long sought success. The students engaged in this were from both sides of life: while I was now admitted to the confidence of the Brothers in spirit life, I yet held free communication with my Master in India.

'These wise students, being satisfied that

in you and myself they had recognized the true spiritual mates, believed that we afforded the demonstration of a certain principle in psychic law, from the fact that I, one of such a pair, was a student and Initiate, and would become a conscious and willing assistant.

'The astral plane, being as purely natural as the physical, is subject to natural spiritual laws as is the lower or earth plane to natural physical law. In the demonstrations of spiritual science, right conditions are no less required than by the chemist in his laboratory, when he would demonstrate a principle in physics. In the spiritual as in the physical world, demonstration of the truth moves with regular and orderly precision.

'The death of your child had developed the fact that you were endowed with rare mediumistic qualities; that is, a natural physical and spiritual constitution that could readily develop clairvoyance, clairaudience, or that peculiar faculty for entering the astral plane in what is known as trance condition.

'Of all this you have known nothing, nor how my wise instructors made plain to me

the proposed steps by which I was to reach my mate and bring her into my world.

'For months my enforced returns to physical life had retarded our plans, and the beginning of your dream, though day by day you were unconsciously being fitted for its reception. Once undertaken, it were fatal to our purpose that it be interrupted; a thing sure to occur during my absence, for only the influence that I alone may exert over you could hold in check all outside interference and suggestion.

'You will now understand the Master's consent to my physical death, and my uncontrolled joy when the gracious permission had been given by those whose vision exceeded mine. I was now enabled to keep continual watch over you, and to guide your spirit along the chosen way. While nature made you a sensitive, it was science alone that enabled you to enter and live upon the astral plane, and intelligently see and understand its conditions. As the perfect complement of her spiritual being, I was thus enabled, under the direction of the Masters,

to bring the spirit of a living woman into a complete astral existence.

'Your dreamland, beloved, is a real land, and your love for your child was the temptation offered you to return to it, and to renounce the world.

'You found that spiritual life was akin to the physical, and that the five physical senses of men are correlated to the spiritual senses of such as have made the transition. You learned that there exist under spiritual law many conditions which are counterfeited by the five physical senses, and you learned that physical being is the shadow rather than the substance of life.

'You found this astral world, higher, finer, more complex, having increased avenues and enlarged capabilities for the attainment of knowledge, the exercise of power, and the enjoyment of love. You learned also that as the bent of youth determines the matured character of man, so do the aspirations of earth life determine the character of his spiritual life and employment, and lengthen or shorten his stay in the astral, or inferior spiritual plane. You then knew that he

who bears faithfully the burdens of life yet turns not his eyes from the heights, will, when freed of the flesh, soon pass beyond this life with which you have become familiar to that of higher employment. You here learned for yourself what Christ himself proclaimed, that in the Father's house there are many mansions. Some of these truths you had already learned through the dream, when your experience was confirmed by the knowledge and belief of a stranger you met in Venice. Little did you think that the proud old English gentleman to whom you so readily gave confidence was my own father, nor can you know the delight I experienced, when he, subject to my suggestion, threw off his habitual reserve, brought you his books, laid bare his history and sorrow, and tarried in that city only that he might aid and comfort my beloved. Yet I may tell you how all this gratified me, and confirmed my faith, and how my soul thrilled with joy when you, after reading the books, named me "Zanoni." You did not then know that you

loved me, but the blessed truth was clear to me.

'During the first years of this beautiful dream you followed the path for love of the little one; but later on, as continual contrast sharpened the harsh details of material life, you turned to the higher life from choice, and the spiritual world gradually became your true home.

'Restrained by the law, it was years before I visibly crossed your path. The law which bound me to you yet forbade me to fetter you. I knew that I must leave your soul free to pursue the higher life, or to turn back to your earthly relations.

'While your child became the holiest of temptations to draw you, yet you will remember that neither gentle persuasion nor wise argument were ever used to coerce your judgment, nor did my presence enter in to lead you from the earth. It was wholly from your own free will that you entered more and more into the harmonious conditions of your dream life. Natural development continued to carry you farther and farther from the life of sense and the

flesh. Your husband and his ambitions became a part of that world in which you no longer cared to dwell. The exactions of social and domestic life became a burden to the flesh, and a weariness to the spirit.

'Thus it was that you entered the astral world, and accompanied your child through the immature period of her spiritual life. Dying in infancy, her mind was unable to grasp the laws of her condition, and she must be educated much after the manner of earth. During this period of child life, before her powers were developed, she must remain within the astral belt, learning of those who loved her, and who for a time retarded their own progress that they might teach her the law, and uplift her to the purer spheres of being. In this wise, you, her mother, participated in the education that was necessary to the child. Thus you must see that in grasping the fundamental truths taught her with such simplicity, your own range extended, and the earth-bound horizon of care-burdened humanity fretted your awakened soul.

'The rest you know: how, later on, I, as

the instructor of your child, entered your life, obtained my rightful place at your side, and under this sweet disguise became your counsellor and guide. Though from the first you trusted me, yet I denied my love, keeping silence, that we might prove the law. The years were winged days of peace; they swept on, and day by day the invisible bond was strengthened. Still I did not speak; and even yet I must repress my own desire, and let your sweet reliance and perfect faith freely and naturally burst the precious bud into the full flower of an eternal love. So sacred are the rights of others, so rigid the law against selfishness, so necessary the freedom of the human will, that for years I did not seek your friendship; even this I denied myself, as I do now deny the pleadings of my own soul for your continued presence. Do I weary you, beloved?'

Startled by his direct question, for I seemed to have lost myself in a delicious dream, I could not at once answer the Master; I could only look my quick, complete denial.

His face was radiant. 'Your answer is

in your eyes,' he said; 'but now' — and a grave expression replaced the smile — 'the final link of this mysterious chain must be given into your hands. You still marvel, my dear one; I see the wonder in your eyes. Even love's philosophy has some mysteries.'

'It is all so marvelous,' I cried, at last finding speech; 'so full of mystery, I am bewildered by my own happiness. It is like the poet's ideal dream.'

'And so it is,' cried Zanoni, joyfully; 'for the ideal is the real. The most exalted dreams of romancer or poet are but the soul's perceptions of the truth; and even I, who was taught this law of love as a principle in nature, who received it from the Masters, — even I, — am filled with wonder. I, who felt I had comprehended its philosophy, yet did not dream of the joy that came with the experience. With all knowledge of the law, even they who taught me are poor in comparison to my possessions.'

'Master, Zanoni,' I at last gathered courage to ask: 'why were we two, out of all that are living and seeking for love, — why were we two so singularly blessed?'

With a smile and a happy enthusiasm Zanoni quickly answered:

"'Many are called but few are chosen." What to us appears, and really is, a special blessing, is yet but the glorious and divine right of all men and women. It is not that we two are the favorites of a sovereign will, but that, through the long chain of our earth lives, and our peculiar temptations, sufferings and experiences, we have finally come together, and, being one, and realizing all the joy of such a union, are now prepared to reveal this law of love to those who are still in darkness, to all lovers and seekers after truth. From your birth and mine, our relation was known and our destinies carefully watched over. It had been hoped by our wise friends that we two might meet on earth, and in that perfect union, with its magical powers, might stand as witnesses and become teachers of this new gospel to men and women. This failing, all then that remained was to teach this woman the truth, as had her mate been taught, and to send her back into the world with this message to humanity.

'And this, my own, is your last and only unfulfilled duty as relates to the world. This revelation may rouse the hostility of the dogmatist and the satire of the pessimist, but it will reach the heart of those who have sought for love. Your story shall stand as among the signs that heralded the rising star, that full revealing of the law which is to come, and which shall prove at once both the human and divine relation of man and woman, and so — usher in the "New Kingdom."'

'What, I?' I cried, still wonderingly; 'I to be so chosen, so trusted? Ah! Master, if I should blunder in the telling it, or cloud it with my poor language, or belittle the grandeur of it all, through lack of understanding?'

'Have no fear,' replied Zanoni, with ready confidence; 'you will return and tell the truth; and because it is the truth, it will not die upon the empty air. It may be doubted, but it will not be forgotten. It may be denied, but it will not be lost.

'For you must not forget how nature conspires to spread the truth. In some remote re-

gion, by an obscure prophet, a single truth is uttered. The very winds of heaven become its messengers. Ignorance and power and superstition rise to crush the intruder. They may seize the prophet, imprison him, torture him, nail him to a cross; but the truth he uttered mocks their wrath, defies their authority, and escapes their dungeons, racks and penalties. It escapes, spanning the seas, encircling the earth, and sweeping outward to the very confines of human thought.'

'And I, — how little I have done that so much honor should be mine.'

'You have builded better than you know, it may be,' replied Zanoni, to my deprecating speech; then adding, 'Is it little service that you have rendered all these years? Is it little service you have rendered science? Is it nothing that you complete the life of one who would not exchange your love for all the transcendent glories of the higher life? Were I to lose the hope of one day calling you to my side, of walking with you that perfect way, even the joys of paradise would fade and fail. Not all the grandeur

of celestial life and power, were worth this meeting and loving and winning you.'

There was silence for a moment; then, conscious of Zanoni's eager, expectant look. I tried to force myself to ask a question that had again and again risen to my lips, but checked as almost disloyalty to him. I was so sorely puzzled, this open, free and full confession of his love to me, a wife, — one bound, — was all so far from what I had been taught.

How could such things be?

'You need not ask it,' said Zanoni softly; 'let me answer the question that troubles your tender soul.'

I was ashamed. I had forgotten how he read my thoughts. I bent my eyes upon the ground.

'Had we met in life, my own,' he continued gently; 'both free, both young, and ready for love's dream, then I might have won you, as men win their brides on earth. But when that hope was killed, and I saw you the bride of another, your earthly life bound in honor, then I knew that never in the flesh would we two meet. I would have

loved you in spite of vows, or creeds, or the laws or prejudices of men; and you,—it may be that your own soul might have recognized the bond, and we two, destined for each other, might have fallen into error, sinned, and so defeated this higher union of spirit. The law of love is the law of life; but there is one inexorable decree of this perfect law, that must be widely taught. *Over broken vows, neglected duties, and despised obligations shall no two reach the city of their dreams.* Though bound in the eternal law, the bride of my soul and mate to share the joys of heaven, yet would we have still been separated on earth by your own innocent vows to another. Have I answered you?'

I murmured, 'Yes,' but could not meet his eyes.

'Look up, beloved, and let me read your soul's desire once more.'

Again I felt the magic of his glance, and yielded to the fascination of his voice, and listened with delight as he continued:

'The time has come when you must make an important decision; but before you

speak, and before your choice be made, there are yet some final truths to learn.

'As you already know, there is no supernatural. Spirit is immortal and men are but gods in bondage. The growth and development of the soul is like to the growth and development of the lily; a pure white flower, springing from roots imbedded in the earth. You have so long lived in the harmonious condition of a purely spiritual life that the world no longer attracts, rather it repels you. The beauty and serenity of your life in dreams first led you upward; until now a something stronger, sweeter, holier than this has descended upon you, and love, encircling as it does both heaven and earth, has set you free, — free to wait and work out any earthly duty, or free to come and dwell with me forever.'

'Free,' I murmured, 'yet bound? Master, I do not understand.'

'Let me explain,' he gently answered; 'for this dear privilege is now mine alone: to teach you how we two are free, yet bound to each other in love, and in the truth and the law. Through this divine mystery, my

own, we must search for the God we worship.

'The conventional and fashionable environment of your life, together with your absorption and satisfaction in your dream life, has prevented your coming closely in contact with the spirit of the age. You have been unconscious of the great groundswell of inquiry, of hope and of anticipation, that is now felt throughout the western world. You have not realized that the people, in this, the dawn of the twentieth century, were waiting and watching for another star that is to rise and lead them. But all in good time you shall read with me the ancient records of life. You shall see the glorious march of humanity, and shall understand how the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and entered in and became the life of the world.

'You will then know how this Divine Spirit has struggled up through the terrible conditions of physical life and the snares of the senses, how it has suffered and been

driven to silence, how it has striven with the evolving intelligence of man.

'Although you have taken no conscious active part in their outward movements, yet has your inner life, my own, been slowly yet grandly unfolding in sympathy with the women of your time. This,' continued the Master, and his voice fell reverently, 'has been truly called, "the woman's age." So it is, beloved; for woman is the spiritual light of the world. Through her, at last, the divine message to mankind is coming.

'In the great physical struggle she was overborne and enslaved, and with the intellectual rise of man his pride and arrogance and ignorance refused to set her free. With the weight of his unjust laws, with the weight of his terrible dogmas, with the weight of his brutal love, he held in check and condemned to silence her prophetic voice.

'All this,' continued Zanoni, triumphantly, 'he is unlearning; while she, the slave of early ages and the toy of later ones, has at last risen, and in the marvelous might of her cause has reached her brother's side, claiming equality. Yet she reaches to his

height, not to conquer him nor to rob him, nor yet to filch from him the noble prerogatives of his manhood. She comes only to satisfy his reason, to open the door of his heart, and to sanctify his love with her spiritual life. Man has been the intellect of the world, woman its soul. Man has reasoned, woman has believed. She could not cope with his argument, he scorned her intuitions. To-day they are coming closer together; her quickened intellect is presenting her cause to his reason, while his expanding soul is opening to the higher truths of life.

'The true relation of man and woman, my own, is that of which I would speak. It is for this I have lived and died according to the flesh, and for which I must yet labor, though myself beyond the losses and misunderstandings of earthly love and desire.

'Does my long discourse weary you, or shall I make clear to you this ideal relation, and how we two are bound, yet free?'

'Continue,' I murmured; for I now felt as if all the mysteries would be cleared.

'Ah, Master,' I repeated; 'hasten, pray. I am so eager, so impatient for it all.'

A light broke over his face. It remained in his eyes as he came still closer, regarding me intently and reading the faith and adoration I made no effort to conceal."

CHAPTER XII.

SUCH IS THE LAW.

AT this point in her recital of the Master's story Mrs. Varien again paused, as if waiting for some word of interest or possible disapproval. Again her husband, smiling sadly, urged her to proceed; assuring her of his deep interest in the marvelous tale.

Eagerly, as if grudging the time, and only smiling back her thanks for his generous consent, the woman resumed the story; claiming our closest attention as she talked on with increasing haste and fervor.

"Said Zanoni: 'A man and a woman constitute the splendid circle of love's law. They are the perfect halves of a perfect sphere: one, yet divisible; one, yet individual; and one, whether united or apart; one, whether mismated or alone. Ever one, yet differing; but inseparable as are light

and shadow, heat and cold, motion and rest.

'Love is of God, and marriages are made in heaven. A man and woman are mated in the chemical forces of nature; they are mated in the intellectual and spiritual forces of the universe.

'Marriage, as the world knows it to-day, is patterned upon that high ideal,' said the Master, with increasing gravity; 'yet, in its accepted legal aspect, it continually outrages the law that proclaims it a divine institution.

'Though society, the church, and established civil law, recognize the true principle of marriage, they as yet misunderstand the application. The world recognizes the bonds but ignores the freedom; it perceives the duties but denies the rights. It talks of love and deals with lust. It seeks after marriage and forms legal partnerships.

'It is not,' continued Zanoni, 'that modern civilization fails to grasp the theory of perfect marriage; it is only that ignorance of the higher law has perverted the practice; misusing the sacred privilege through motives of pride and passion, jealousy and greed.

'The world-wide confusion upon this matter arises not from the depravity of man but from his ignorance; for the soul of man, informed from higher sources, is perpetually seeking its mate through all the mazes of human selfishness, and it is this eternal demand of the real self that makes continual war upon established statutes of the civil law.

'It is not the flesh, however it may be starved, bruised or beaten; it is the soul of mortal man that sorrows and is acquainted with grief. It is this highest nature that has mourned its loss and yearned for its mate, yet has been defeated by the coils of the flesh and the unreason of the intellect.

'The immoralities in legal marriage, no less than passions unrestrained, have filled the world with every species of depravity. Ignorance of the law is confusion and punishment. They who either mate or marry in defiance of the supreme decree must suffer all the consequences of such a crime against nature; and they who are born of such parents must work out their destinies,

hampered and burdened by inherited tendencies and weaknesses of mind and body.

'Look upon the dwarfed, misshapen bodies, and the pinched, brutal, distorted faces of the children of men. See the almost universal disproportion of limb and of feature; the visible mold of the thoughts and deeds of the parents. The law that creates harmony in the spiritual world demands it in the physical, and only that perfect mating of body as well as spirit will restore in form and feature the original perfect type.

'It was not a threat, but a solemn proclamation of the law, when it was said of old, "The sins of the father are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation." Yet, as time rolls on, and age follows age, humanity's horizon grows brighter with added revelations of divine wisdom. The law of love is in an eternal state of unfoldment; and, as Buddha came to impart the law, as Christ came to exemplify the brotherhood of man, so shall there come another teacher of the truth,—one who shall make clear that crowning glory and

mystery of human experience, the true relation of man and woman.

'As ignorance has degraded the divine ideal of marriage,' continued the Master, 'so it has perverted the sacred law of affinity, and leveled it to a brutal theory of free love, and of unrestricted and unlicensed selection. The unhappy and unholy relations of men and women vitiate all life upon the earth. Ignorant of the law, and bewildered by the confusion of their surroundings, these poor puppets are continually betrayed by their own undisciplined natures. Yet within these unhappy mortals is the divine principle of true selection, forever unfolding, and urging them from false conditions.

'Duty to God and the brotherhood of man is thundered from a thousand pulpits, yet who among these servants of the truth shall dare to teach this true relation between man and woman. This is the love that has been ignored, crushed, dragged in the dust. This is the love that has been plucked from its starry throne and twisted and tortured to the level of man's lowest nature. He has

disdained it as a crown and used it as a footstool.'

Continued Zanoni: 'In the divine law there is no provision for mismating; there are no causes for divorce. As divorce is without the law, the marriage that preceded it was the initial sin. Divorce is but the pitiful expedient of the wronged life, whether that sin were ignorantly or willfully committed. The shame of divorce is the logical result of unnatural marriage. It is the self-invited retribution of ignorance; it signifies the inevitable revolt of nature.

'Unnatural marriage is sin; divorce is hideous,' continued the Master; and there was, in his noble and commanding face, such intensity of conviction, such certainty of truth, that I felt as if through me he hoped to reach the world of mortals, that could no longer hear his voice.

'The law of love is the law of harmony,' he said. 'That which is allied by nature never separates. Does the lily seek divorce from the dewdrop, or the sunflower ask separation from the sunlight? Nor are there whips and chains to bind them together.

"'Stolen fruit is sweet,' men say. That were not true if each man knew wherein the garden God had planted the tree whose fruits were intended for him. There was never yet a lover's quarrel. Love is a divine understanding; and that which brands it a cruel, jealous, tyrannical passion, is the voice of ignorance. Love acknowledges a million debts, it never sets one task. Love gives to the uttermost, but it never makes a demand. Love knows but one, and that its other, dearer self.

"'Pursuit is better than possession,' is the sorrowful maxim of men. This is true only because man's nature, both human and divine, has been cheated by his own blindness to the law. This is true only when the hand that reaches for a blessing plucks the curse.

'Does the bloom of a rose ever weary the eye, or the song of a bird ever vex the ear? Does the perfect in nature ever pall, either upon soul or sense? Man does not suffer satiety through possession, but through knowledge of the cheat; through his unsatisfied heart.'

'Master,' I said, interrupting him; 'is not this a hopeless picture of life? Who shall teach the world, and how can it learn the truth?'

'True,' answered Zanoni, sadly. 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Yet,'—the old, calm hopefulness lighting his face,—'we must remember that underlying these errors of men is the soul's eternal progress toward the truth. In time, Love will reveal her divine form to human understanding; for that which is our own is forever circling toward us, that which is our own will come to us in time, and in that final union will be no satiety.'

Said the Master again: 'As you already know, even in earth life, separation is more of spirit than of flesh, and the first is the more painful to endure. We live in the daily companionship of people who will forever remain strangers to us. We live in daily touch of those bound to us by blood or marriage bond, with yet a gulf between us. In every relation of life we deal with strangers. We do not know this man or this woman by whose side we have walked

a lifetime in the closest earthly relation. Brothers and sisters misunderstand each other from the cradle, drift apart, and carry their burdens alone. Children are often aliens under their father's roofs; while husbands and wives continually cheat each other, calling it duty.

'It is only in the higher life that all relations are natural, where the unclothed spirit must seek its true affinities. In this fair country, where thought is one with action, and where desire is flight, no two souls are linked together that would be free. It would sadden you,' continued Zanoni gently, 'were you to know how few men and women, bearing this close earthly relation, desire to prolong the companionship in the spirit life. It would sadden you, dear heart, until you saw what joy their freedom brought them.'

Then, turning again to me, with a swiftly softening glance, my Master continued:

'You have been mine,' — and his voice rose with a clear, triumphant ring that was music to my listening heart. 'You have been mine since we two — one, yet divided — set out upon the awful path of existence.

Through æons of time we have trod the heights and depths of being, apart, alone, yet forever bound in the law immutable. You have been mine since we were struck as twin sparks from the great burning sun of life, and were sent out upon the weary path of mortal experience. Through the pitiful ages we have wandered, my own, struggling we knew not why, striving we knew not for what, yearning vaguely for that which was nameless to reason; ever seeking, ever restless, our lives unsatisfied, our destinies unfulfilled, yet divinely led on by the soul toward its own.'

I would have spoken then, in answer to his entreating glance, but could find no words; yet in his outstretched hand I placed my own, in silent recognition of the bond. Then, seemingly satisfied, the Master continued softly, as if this confession were too sacred to be shared even with the bright immortals among whom he dwelt:

'You are no more mine, no less mine own, than you have been from the beginning,' he said. 'Since the potential forces of nature radiated from the central sun of life you

have been mine. In the radiant heart of that great sun was love born. Creation is but the manifested principle of love. Love is generation,—begetting. Through love alone were manifested life and light, heat, motion and intelligence. From this pure, primal source sprang suns and their systems, and all the myriad forms of life terrestrial and of life celestial. Such is the law. Does not all this seem true and beautiful to you, my Dian?'

I bowed in silence. These great thoughts stunned me, overwhelmed me.

After a moment Zanoni continued: 'A man and a woman, when mated under the law, are as the halves of a perfect sphere. Yet must you know that in this infinite creation no two of these spheres are alike as to form, constitution or purpose; nor can any but the perfect halves ever mate in true marriage, either in flesh or in the spirit. Marriage, as decreed under the perfect law, necessitates a perfect comprehension, each of the other. It means full appreciation, complete satisfaction, absolute faith. It demands the instant response of the body, mind and soul of the one, to the trinity

within the other. Ah, my beloved,' cried Zanoni, triumphantly pressing my hand that lay unresistingly in his own; 'marriage is the crowning glory of human life. The perfect marriage is a bond eternal. The perfect marriage is a boundless freedom. The perfect marriage is a perfect understanding. Look up, my precious one, and read with me the high intent of the law. One love for man,—one bride,—one mate; none other upon earth, nor in heaven.'

Zanoni was for the moment silent; then, turning from me the celestial light of his countenance, and gazing with deep intentness upon the impenetrable veil of light, he said gently:

'Though the ordinary memory of man may not reach back to the beginnings, yet the conscious soul, on reaching its maturity of earthly experience, may perceive its own past wanderings. My beloved,'—and the Master raised his hand, with a slow, peculiar movement,—'would you know the secret springs of human action, would you read the long history of two immortal souls? Then look; for this night your eyes shall see Truth, and your heart shall learn the Law.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

"WHOM GOD HATH JOINED."

STILL in utter silence, too overawed for speech," continued Dian Varien, "I obeyed the Master's voice and glance, gazing with wonder upon the magic picture that came obedient to the motion of his hand.

Slowly the great veil had parted and the tiny rift had widened until our eyes rested upon a strange, new world.

Before us stretched an open glade in a strange, tropical forest; a forest of gigantic growth and dense foliage, whose towering shrubs and gorgeous plants resembled nothing I had seen in books or travel. Even the birds and insects that flitted and hummed, and the serpents and lizards that glided and crawled through these emerald tints, were larger and more brilliantly colored than those with which the modern nat-

uralist is familiar. It was not, however, the wonderful forest, nor its songsters nor serpents, that so riveted my attention; it was the simultaneous appearance of a man and woman entering the open glade from opposite directions. They were savages, — dark and swarthy creatures; yet young, lissom, and eager; with a certain wild grace of untrained animals, and with a certain comeliness in their dark, expectant faces. Their loins were but lightly covered with the untanned skins of animals, and their sinewy arms and legs were decked with barbarous ornaments that clinked and rattled with every swaying movement of their bodies.

I felt that they were lovers, and from their quick, sharp exclamation of delight and satisfaction, saw that they were keeping some frequent tryst. In their own strange language they talked, or rather chattered like the apes from which they seemed not far removed. The embrace that appeared only playful, like the sport of young tiger cubs, soon turned more seriously, and the man clasped his companion with the fierceness of a terrible passion;

while she, laughing, and now eluding, now yielding, played with his desire. Their black eyes burned; their arms were intertwined; and the supple and more delicate form of the woman seemed crushed in that mad embrace. The wild tangle of her jet-black hair enwrapped his swelling throat, and his savage kiss left a drop of blood upon her brown, naked shoulders. I raised my hand to shut out this vision of human tigers, when the woman, wheeling suddenly and still laughing, freed herself, and with a mocking cry bounded from her lover's arms into the dark green forest. The man, agile as herself, uttered a single guttural note of anger and alarm, and swift as a shadow sprang toward the thicket and pursued his desire, disappearing in the wood. Before I could recover from the effect of this primeval romance the great forest had been wiped out, and in its stead ran a long, narrow valley, with blue, encircling mountains. Along the valley's verdant bloom were thickly scattered groups of huts, mere kennels of mud and boughs and grass, and around

these wretched habitations idled numerous ferocious, swarthy savages. A little apart, near the opening of one of these poor dwellings, I saw a man and woman, and in their seamed and coarsened faces I recognized the lovers of the glade. They were no longer young, nor, I perceived, were they lovers now. The black, half-shut eyes of the man burned with the unrestrained passions of the brute, while a terrible patience had beaten out and withered all the wild beauty from the woman's face. The man seemed in the act of accusing her, while she, cowering under his fierce eye, shrank from his raised hand in sullen silence. Her silence, however, seemed only to enrage him the more; for, suddenly springing forward, he caught his trembling slave by her long, black hair, and, felling her with his clenched hand, he dropped upon her prostrate body and began beating it, and tearing at her wide-open eyes — eyes that turned upon him in an agony of supplication and uttered a wordless prayer to the only God she ever knew.

Again I would have raised my hand to my

eyes, for this picture of savage hate was more terrible than that of savage love; but even as I made that quick, involuntary motion, the mountain and valley faded, and this prehistoric tragedy was swallowed up.

Again I would have spoken; but again the luminous veil parted, and my whole thought was turned upon a fairer picture.

It was the chamber of some ancient potentate to which my gaze was now admitted. The massive grandeur of the architecture, the impressive strength of the great carved statues, and the unique and brilliant frescoes, together with the gorgeous tapestries, betrayed the interior of an Egyptian palace. In another moment, however, I was lost to the beauty of both decoration and furnishing, as my eyes became riveted upon the most priceless adornment of this royal apartment. Nothing in flesh and blood was ever so faultlessly beautiful, so delicately voluptuous, so radiantly haughty and adorable, as this woman who was mistress here. The filmy robes she wore seemed a part of her royal self, as if they lived and breathed

with every movement of her perfect limbs. The jewels flashing round her girdle and sparkling in her tawny hair paled beside the light that centered in her deep, dark eyes. Under the soft, white skin the warm blood surged and died with every breath, while the scarlet of her perfect mouth was Cupid's burning bow. She was alone, and as my eye fell upon her was rising from among the cushions of a low, luxurious couch. She sprang forward impatiently, paused, bending her head, and then turned her face eagerly toward the curtained portal. She waited for a little time; then, uttering a low, inarticulate cry, hastily crossed the apartment, and, reaching the window, leaned out, gazing intently into the star-lit beauty of an Egyptian night.

'He is not coming,' she cried at last; and her voice, shaken with love and anger, was the most musical, resonant and enticing I have ever heard. 'He has deceived me;' and withdrawing herself from the watch, she bit her red lips, clenched her jeweled hands, and then burst into a storm of tears. But even while she shook with rage,

and her overflowing tears fell dripping upon the satin billows of her white, uncovered bosom, there came a sudden slight sound from without. The next moment the heavy curtains parted, admitting a visitor,—a young, yet grave, majestic looking man, clad in the flowing vestments of the Egyptian priesthood. As he entered, catching sight of the flower whose beauty was but freshened by the dew of her tears, the man's face changed. Over the priestly calm ran a wave of earthly desire, and into his serene eyes leaped the devouring flame of wild, impassioned love. Just then the woman turned, discovering him. Their eyes met, and then, like two swift-flying meteors drawn at last into a common circle of attraction, they rushed together; he clasping her with the madness of human desire, while she, abandoning all her sensuous beauty to the embrace, lifted her red lips, and for the moment both were lost to all but one delight. I saw the face of the priest as he bent over her in rapturous adoration; I saw the answering glances, from the darkening, half-closed eyes of

both, and — or was I dreaming — or did I not recognize, in the veiled velvet of the woman's eyes, the same spirit that had looked from the eyes of the dusky woman of the forest? I knew her — this savage woman, with all the fierce love and longing, with all the eager questioning in her soul. Under this enchanting disguise I saw the unsatisfied spirit of the savage; I saw the rude desire of the barbarian clothed in the soft arts of this Egyptian sorceress.

Where before I had been offended, I was now fascinated; for passion equipped with the livery of kings, and seen under the glamour of royal refinement, appears the very image of divine love. My heart went out to this priest and princess. I forgave him his broken vows, and her that tempted him. I invested all this rapturous meeting with the sanctity of a stainless love. Yet even as my thought ran on in sympathy with these lovers of antiquity, I saw the heavy curtains again disturbed, and then a hand — a large, brown, shapely hand, the hand of a man — stealthily lay hold upon the drapery and carefully draw it aside.

Upon the third finger of this hand I observed a magnificent ring, the signet ring of a reigning sovereign. Neither of the lovers saw this hand, so self-absorbed were they in their own murmurings and repeated caresses. Neither did they see the face which presently appeared above the hand,—a kingly, haughty, dusky countenance, whose sensual beauty was now distorted by a passion so implacable that it might have belonged to some fiend incarnate. Under the royal circlet that adorned his head, the low brow was drawn together in a terrible scowl. In his narrow, half-shut eyes burned a greenish flame; and the full, red lips turned livid, writhing in jealous fury. I would have screamed a warning to the betrayed lovers, but my tongue refused to utter a sound; and even yet that terrible fear pierces my soul. The unconscious victims, the stealthy intruder, and then the sudden, cat-like spring, the circling arm, the gleam of steel; and then, above a shriek and prayer commingled, I heard the avenger's voice: 'False wife, false mistress, false Priest — and still falser friend!' Then turn-

ing toward his own breast the dripping blade, I saw the murderer fall beside his victims, and his heart's blood, running in a common stream with theirs, soaked the bright rugs and stained the polished floor.

I could bear no more, and it was well the ghastly vision passed, fading, dissolving and dying on the instant.

I would have questioned Zanoni, but again my attention was diverted from this scene; for, where but a moment before had towered the colossal splendor of the Egyptian palace, now stood the mean proportions of a peasant's hut. Within the hut I saw a woman, a sweet-faced, stolid-looking creature, following the hard round of her daily tasks. Though still a young woman, her slender form was bent under the burden of her labor, and in her slow, steady glance was the pathetic patience one sees in the eyes of dumb, driven brutes. In her arms she carried a baby, while clinging to her skirts and playing upon the earthen floor were others, mere babies, all of them her children as I knew by their resemblance to her.

The woman was preparing food that she

neatly wrapped and laid in a basket; after which, and still carrying the child, she passed out of the house, under the hot, mid-day sun, and plodding along under the double burden went slowly down a footpath toward the distant field.

The magic picture enabled me to follow her; and I noted with pity the big drops of perspiration that stood out upon her face, and how her slender arms seemed weighted with the burden of the sleeping child. It was a long mile she must have gone; never stopping to rest, not even when she entered the narrow strip of woodland that divided her from the fields. Now we heard voices, — the workmen at a distance. Her dull face brightened, and she quickened her pace. Suddenly she paused, and bent eagerly forward with a swift, startled look in her face. I also saw the cause of her alarm. But a few feet distant, just on the other side of a leafy clump of shrubs, I saw a man and woman. The man was a great, rough peasant, and his companion, a buxom, comely lass, flushed with her work in the fields or the words to which she listened. The man

bent eagerly over the girl, while she, saucily tempting, laughed in his face. Then I saw him in rude playfulness grasp her little, brown hands; saw her pretend anger; and then, — the old, old story, — she was in his arms and their lips met in a hearty kiss. I looked at the woman who carried the child and the basket. She neither screamed nor turned in fury upon the father of her children; but, as if suddenly conscious of her burden, she put the basket upon the ground and herself sat down upon a fallen tree. I saw her hug her baby closer to her bosom, while big tears, dripping from her cheeks, fell upon the little sleeper. Then she turned her face from whence the voices came and raised her unhopeful eyes to heaven, and — I could not be mistaken — I knew her. In the eyes of this poor peasant, this faithful wife and mother, I recognized the spirit of her that had been offered up a sacrifice to her own faithlessness.

'Poor soul!' I cried, and would have stretched my hands to her, knowing all her sorrow; but again the shadows fell

upon the fields and wood, and this poor, brief page of history was done.

Still obedient to Zanoni's request, I again looked out into the magic world, and in the dim half-light of dawn could trace the outlines of a high-walled, lonely convent. Its massive outer gates were ajar and the heavy doors were open, and through a wide, bare hall passed a procession of nuns, chanting.

Their pallid faces were fixed as the faces of the dead, and their joyless eyes were bent upon their rosaries, as their unsmiling lips told off the prayers and saints.

Following these black-robed sisters came one in white, — a virgin, clothed as a bride. 'Ah!' I drew my breath in astonishment. 'Who could have condemned this fair and fragile child to this living tomb? What unhappy fate could thus early have robbed life, and love, and the world of their charms?' As she drew nearer, bowing her golden head and earnestly repeating the prayers, I detected in her lovely countenance neither regret, remorse, nor discontent. It was thoughtful and pensive, yet the serene and innocent face of a child.

Impatiently turning to Zanoni, for I could not repress my astonishment, I again asked, 'Why did she resign the world before she knew either its joys or sorrows?' Before he could reply, the sweet novitiate raised her eyes. Their violet light turned full upon me, and that glance went straight to my own soul. Again I knew her. Clothed anew as was the spirit in this fair veil of flesh, I knew her; and with each new form she seemed to come closer to my own life. I read her history in her eyes. I saw the hopeless search of centuries, and no longer wondered that her weary spirit should seek in God the peace it had been denied of men. Swift, however, as had been that glance from her spirit to mine, I read the unquenched desire, the eternal longing for love that lives in the heart of a woman; and I knew this child of God was still a wanderer.

'Are you wearied with these pictures, or shall we read another page from history?'

It was Zanoni who spoke; and his voice, low and clear, dispelled the sadness of the vision. Readily yielding to the half entreaty of his voice, I hastily answered, 'Pray teach

me further; give me the key to all this suffering and sacrifice.'

There was a strange gladness in his face, an unwonted eagerness in his voice, when he said, 'She who followed Love you have seen: now I would have you read the soul of him who searched for Truth.'

Again the veil parted, but now upon a land of ice and snow. I now looked upon the frigid North, over whose ice-locked seas there hung a rosy light from the dull red sun yet lingering upon the horizon. Within the circle of that red horizon line I saw but one living creature, and this a huge, red-bearded, blue-eyed hunter of the North. His giant form was clad in magnificent furs. In his hands he carried a huge, cumbersome spear, and at his side hung curious weapons of the chase and battle. Haughty and implacable he stood, sweeping the frozen circle with a conquering glance. Deep, defiant lines seamed his brow, and around his cruel mouth and heavy jaw were traced the signs of an indomitable will. In his piercing eyes burned the fire of conquest and ambition. I then perceived about him, rather than saw,

many trophies of the chase and battle. I saw the fierce things slain for food and clothing, saw the bodies of men killed in savage warfare, and I saw the perilous peaks he had scaled and the stormy seas he had navigated in the hope of extending his domain. In this rude savage I read the primal spirit of a royal race, and as the fierce light of his eye turned full upon me I shivered with a nameless awe and fascination.

'Who is this man?' I demanded; but the Master, smiling gently, raised his hand, and from our vision faded the frozen region and its savage warrior-king.

It was a strange transition from the desolation of the frigid North to the solemn splendor of an oriental council chamber, where had gathered a company of men demanding either justice or revenge.

I have but a dim remembrance of the motley crowd, though I perceived that several races and nations of men were represented, — men upon whose faces hate and scorn and derision were painted, but in none did I see pity traced. My whole attention was fixed upon the two central figures of

the scene,—The Prisoner and the Judge. I seemed not to breathe. What shall I say of Him who stood bound in the presence of his accusers. The majesty of His person and the majesty of His countenance no words can describe. He was a man, yet all unlike the beings who gathered like ravening wolves about Him; for never was seen such kingly bearing and such deep humility in one accused and brought to judgment. He neither looked defiance nor showed any trace of fear, and in his tranquil, all-comprehending glance was neither guilt, nor anger, nor any trace of reproach.

Then I looked upon the Judge, — he who, clothed in the white and purple of authority, must render verdict upon the Prisoner's guilt or innocence. Him that stood accused I had not thought to pity; pity is for weakness; but for this royal judge I felt a strange, sudden thrill of pity and of sympathy. Dark, haughty and magnificent as was this important personage, I yet perceived that under his royal arrogance lurked a secret terror. The quick, sidelong glances and nervous movement of his hands be-

trayed suppressed anxiety, and seemed to reverse the position, making him the accused rather than the judge at this tribunal.

He listened to the mad denunciations of the mob, and then held subtle parley with the frantic wretches, making desperate efforts to appease their wrath.

'I find no fault in Him,' came with hesitation from the judge: at which, the fury of the people overwhelmed him; at which, pride and love of power overwhelmed him; and then, turning in horror from the act, he exclaimed, 'I wash my hands of this,'—and so permitted the people to have their will.

When He who was bound had been taken away, I saw this royal judge rapidly descend from his high seat and pace the now deserted council chamber. Abject fear clouded his kingly countenance: his brows were knitted in an agony of remorse, and, raising his eyes toward heaven and roughly intertwining his bloodless fingers, I heard his trembling lips repeat again and again, 'What is truth?'

How could he know the truth, poor savage? My heart responded in sympathy

with every exclamation; for I knew this man —this king of brief authority: I had seen his spirit in the crude warrior-king of the Ancient North. Strangely fascinated, I continued to gaze upon him who in ignorance had condemned the Guiltless One, and in whose noble face warring passions and convictions had wiped out kingly dignity.

'What is the truth?' repeated the self-condemned, as from without came more and more faintly the brutal oaths and cries and jests of those who bore away the Innocent: 'What is the truth?' Yet even as he spoke a dimness came upon his features and the glitter of his royal robe was dulled. The council chamber faded, and in its stead I saw two mighty armies met in deadly conflict upon an open plain. They were drawn up before a high-walled city, and for the moment I was blinded with the splendor of the chivalric array,—the ranks which glittered with the blazonry of embroidered and ermined surcoats, of shields and bonnets, and the gorgeous banners and pennons of the princely chieftains.

So grand and so terrible a sight I

had never dreamed to witness. Jumbled into an inextricable mass of glittering mail and gleaming steel were these hosts, horse and foot; and I saw the deadly work of the lance and crossbow, of mace and battle-axe. I saw the curved scimeter and light javelin of the infidel host cut through the ranks of those who fought under a banner whereon blazed a blood-red cross.

Among the thousands engaged in this terrible conflict I was constrained to follow the fortunes of one who, though unhorsed and wounded, now sought to rescue his banner, just captured by his supple adversary. He had become separated from his troop, and the enemies of the Cross were closing fast about him. I was lost in wonder at his strength and skill and courage. In this close encounter the light weapons of the infidel were overborne by the terrific strokes of the battle-axe, wielded by the knight of the Cross. Another and another of the swarthy orientals rolled upon the ground, while here and there in the Crusader's defaced armor great rents and seams began to show. His left arm now hung

useless; blood oozed through the riveted links of steel; but with the right arm he continued to swing his axe with superhuman strength. The banner of the cross went down with its captor; but even as its white field soaked up the infidel blood, it was snatched from under the bleeding body, and shaken aloft with a hoarse, triumphant cry. Force of numbers, however, finally overbore the superior equipment and invincible courage of the knight, and I saw his stalwart form reel and stagger under the pitiless storm of attack. At last, fallen but not conquered, the brave warrior, sinking upon his knees, continued the defense of the cross. In all, ten Turkish infidels had answered to the well-directed weapons of the Christian knight; but now his strong arm faltered, his helmeted head sank upon his breast, and his triumphant assailants seized upon his weapons, robbed him of sword and lance, and then, as if curious to see the countenance of such a foe, one stooped and raised the visor from the dying face. It was a noble face, — young, smooth and fine, — but already sternly set in the terrible faith of

the Holy Crusade. It was implacable against the heathen even in its dying agonies. Wrenching himself from that contaminating touch, the dying knight by one supreme effort raised his mail-clad arm, and even while the hoarse death-rattle sounded in his throat I heard him cry, 'God and the right!' And again I knew him. How unlike were the dark Roman ruler and the fair Saxon knight; but I saw the spirit of him that had denied the Christ, now, as a Defender of the Faith, yield up the mortal tenement in His name.

'A sorrowful page from the long history of one immortal soul!' It was the Master who spoke. Then he added: 'But who would know the Truth must dare to look her in the face. Yet look again, beloved, for there are less somber chapters in this book of mortal experience.'

Obedient still to Zanoni's voice and glance, I turned my eyes again to the parted veil of light, and saw a man grown old in deep study and reflection. I saw the cold, passionless face of one who had lived upon the thoughts rather than the affections of men. Alone,

and self-absorbed, the aged student sat among his priceless treasures of human thought. I marked the course of his study, — great tomes of knowledge. The historian and scientist, and the poets, philosophers and the great divines, were neighbors upon those encircling shelves. There were scrolls of ancient manuscript with their quaint illuminations; there were multiplied fresh volumes of the latest thoughts of man.

While the scholar had tarried in his search, time had frosted his hair and set grave lines about his thin, cold face. Neither his years, however, nor his student's gown, nor his peaceful occupation, deceived me. I would know this searcher for truth under any disguise of flesh. We watched him as he read. Upon the page of his open book I glanced, and saw that it was a history of the first Holy Crusade. Finally he pushed the open volume from him with an impatient frown and gesture. 'Fools and bigots,' muttered the old man scornfully; 'to propagate the gospel of peace through such inhuman slaughter.' Then he leaned back in his great carved chair, sighing wistfully as he

gazed into the glowing fire that did not seem to warm his withered frame.

The flames of the fire died upon the hearth, the lamp burned low, and through the bare, uncurtained window came the first faint streak of dawn.

Still the old man did not stir. He still sat staring at the ashes; and upon his fixed, white face lingered the baffled, unsatisfied expression of one who has searched in vain. Though the spirit had once more sought release from the body, it had left its eternal struggle imprinted upon the inanimate clay.

'Ah, if I might have told him!' I cried, as the darkness settled over the crowded shelves and the ghastly sleeper in the high-backed chair.

'Then had he not built the ladder by which the soul must rise,' replied Zanoni gently. 'But listen,' continued the Master; and as he spoke came from out the darkness the pitiful moans of persons in mortal agony. I strained my eyes into the blackness that yawned beyond the veil of light, but only sounds came back. Now there was a prayer, rising above the moans: not such a prayer

as mortal suffering wrings from dying lips, but such as faith sends up.

It was the calm and solemn petition of one who offers consolation. I trembled; for the voice of him that prayed was Heaven's own music, so sweet, so tender, and so earnest in its faith. While the voice prayed there came a flush in the east, — a rosy light that broadened into the glory of morning, lighting as it came a piteous spectacle.

The battle was done, and among the thickly strewn dead and dying I saw dark figures moving swiftly and silently.

Over the prostrate form of a young officer I saw a black-robed nun bend and stanch the blood that gushed from a gaping wound. Then she lifted the helpless head and put water to the parched lips. Her white hand was lightly laid upon the matted hair, tenderly pushing it from the death-damp brow. The fast-whitening face was that of a young man, whom, from his gold-laced coat and jeweled decorations, I judged to be an officer of high rank. In his feeble hand he held some tiny object that he pressed to his lips with the last remnant of his strength. Seeing this,

the childless one, and mother of all sufferers, lifted the dying head upon her arm, murmuring the prayer of the Church.

At this moment there appeared the stalwart figure of a priest, and I saw him pause, looking with compassion upon the scene. Then he stooped, saying softly, 'Son, is it well with thee?' Again I heard the voice of him that prayed. The priest also was a young man, but little older than the wounded one; yet how unlike was that one face, strong, calm, and schooled in resignation, to the other, weak and torn with pain and the hopeless desire of life.

'You talk of consolation,' burst from the sufferer; 'you who have never loved,' — and his glazing eye turned full upon the priest. 'You who never loved a woman may well point to heaven as the only hope of happiness. You who never had a wife, dearer than all the joys of heaven — your other self, the very angel of your life — what consolation can such as you give to a husband, to one who loves? Ah, you priests and nuns,' — and the dying voice shrilled high in its agony, 'what do you know of love that makes

heaven of this earth and robs heaven of its glory when torn apart like this?'

Over the calm face of the priest there swept a strangely troubled look. The sister's head bent lower, quite concealing her face. The holy father would have spoken, but again the quivering tones of the dying rung out on the crisp, morning air.

'Oh, you priests and nuns who abjure God's law of love, how dare such as you offer consolation? How can prayers from such as you make soft the dying bed? I do not want your prayers. I do not want to die with all of life and love before me. There is no God of justice!' Saying this, the sufferer, now delirous, essayed to press the portrait to his lips; failing this, he moaned out feebly a woman's name, and then — the spirit had passed on.

For a moment neither the oath-bound son nor daughter of the Church moved or spoke. The holy calm of their lives seemed to have been too rudely touched. The sister was first to recover. She had not once looked up; but now, raising her meek eyes to the

face of the priest, she said tremblingly, 'Father, his soul is with God.'

At which straight glance, each into the other's eyes, both started, as if in mutual recognition, and then as swiftly each drew back. Into the eyes of both a sudden fire had leaped. It was as if two prisoners bound in chains had seen and recognized some old-time friend or lover. I saw the man's face kindle with delight; and over hers a soft, angelic smile shone dazzlingly. I perceived, through that subtle sense called sympathy, that these two had never met before, and I as surely knew that they would not meet again in that life. Now I beheld the power of the Church. So quickly had he conquered this outleap of nature, so quickly had he checked the cry of the soul, that it seemed almost as if the noble gravity of the father's face had never been disturbed; for, raising his hands both above the dead and the living, the priest silently bestowed his blessing: then, his head proudly erect, he turned his face toward the rising sun, and strode rapidly over the battlefield.

Not until he had quite disappeared among

the scattered trees and debris of the battle did the sister again look up. Her lovely face was white as that which lay at her feet. Out of her soft eyes the sudden light had faded. Her trembling lips still mechanically repeated the prayers of the Church, but her white hand was tightly pressed above her heart.

My soul went out in immeasurable pity toward these wanderers; for once again I knew them both: she, the fair virgin of the cheerless convent, now lovelier become in the full flower of womanhood; and he, no less the king, the knight, the student, though he had put down the scepter, sword, and student's gown for the peaceful robe and ritual of the Church.

'Why must this be?' I cried, and I felt the tears come rushing from my heart. I had entered into these two lives until their loss was now mine, as had all their searching and sorrowing been my own.

'How blind!' I cried, turning to Zanoni; 'how cruelly blind!'

'Yet this is life,' replied the Master; then adding, 'Beloved, the history of these two draws near its close. But one more picture

of the past remains, and then you hold the key. Hark, what is it that we hear?'

I listened, all expectant now; for somehow the destiny of these two shadows had become of strange interest to me. I had felt their griefs, pitied their mistakes from the beginning, and no part of their sad history but struck in my very soul an answering chord of sympathy.

'Ah, music!' I cried: 'Thank God for this!' How the full, grand tones of the organ rolled out the triumphant beat of the wedding march. The battlefield was no more; and now I saw, yet dimly, as through a mist, a church interior, and a bridal party moving up the aisles. I could not, however, distinguish any faces through the mist; but could only fancy that youth and love were taking on the vows that bind for life, and, recalling my own ideals, I felt a great tenderness for her who there cast herself into this untried path.

But, hark again: The music slowly changed its measure, as did the lofty proportions of the church. The great volume of sound swelled with solemn intonation. It

was now a funeral march, and it was down the aisle of a small chapel that I saw, still as through a veil, another procession pass. This one, however, bore a black-draped object, and I perceived that the bearers were young men, uniformed, if I mistake not, as officers of the English army.

'Who are these?' I now demanded, thrilling with a strange excitement: "Who are these? This bride? This young man carried to his grave?' A light seemed breaking in upon my soul. 'Master, Zanoni, who are these I have seen? Tell me, for I must know.'

And then he who had stood beside me, and shown me all the mystery, now drew me closer to his side, and, looking down into my very soul, replied in tones where love and triumph struggled for supremacy:

''T is they who searched for Love and Truth, and to their final triumph the heavens above and earth beneath now stand witness.' Then bending and clasping in his own my trembling hands, Zanoni cried exultingly: 'You know me now, my own. In your white soul I see the truth for which I searched

and sorrowed. In the light of your dear eyes I read fulfilment of the perfect law, and in the miracle of your unbounded trust in me is all God's infinite wisdom laid bare. But I would hear you speak to me. Does not your own soul re-echo and repeat that grand old song of songs: "My beloved is mine and I am his?" Speak to me, my mate and angel; tell me that at last you have found love.'

I looked up. Soul to soul we stood. The Seventh Seal was broken. There was no longer any mystery in life or in death. God stood revealed, — for Love and Truth were now made one."

The Light Bearers

By J. Otto Schweizer

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR ALL ETERNITY.

"THE LIGHT BEARERS"

Photographic copy of a late work in Bronze

By J. Otto Schweizer, Sculptor,
of Philadelphia
A Student of the Great School

"Love alone is the immortal. It has wings, rising and dwelling in the light. Love is the light, but she the white light of wisdom that beats upon the throne of God."

The Light Bearers

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR ALL ETERNITY.

There dwells one bright Immortal on the earth,
Not known of men. They who know her not
Go hence forgotten from the House of Life,
Sons of oblivion.

To her once came
That awful shape which all men hold in dread,
And she with steadfast eyes regarded him,
With heavenly eyes: eyes, half sorrowful, and then
Smiled and passed by. "And who art thou," he cried
"That lookest on me, and art not appalled.
That seemest so fragile, yet defiest death?
Not thus do mortals face me. What art thou?"

But she no answer made: silent she stood,
Awhile in holy meditation stood:
And then moved on through the enamored air
Silent, with luminous uplifted brows —
Time's sister, Daughter of eternity,
Death's deathless enemy, whom men called Love.

— THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

THE vision was done," continued Dian Varien, "and now between us two and that marvelous past the veil of light was once more fallen.

'It is the Future, my beloved, that must now concern us; the splendid Future toward which we have so painfully toiled.' It was my Zanoni who spoke, and who, reading my thought, continued: 'Knowing these things you have witnessed, it is no longer mockery to proclaim that marriages are made in heaven. Once realizing the basis upon which this declaration rests, we know that marriage is not merely one in flesh but one in mind and spirit, and that this twain once having come together, after long and weary searching, shall be one indeed, and shall merge that grand, completed self into an everlasting, conscious harmony.'

Here he paused, a shadow crossing his noble face; and when he spoke again I knew it was with effort.

'But, my own,' he said, 'there is another law which continually shadows the soul, and urges it onward and upward toward the sources of eternal truth. This is the mighty law of evolution, which controls creation and not only inspires the atoms of dust, but

the souls of men toward an eternally ascending plane.

'Under this stupendous law men in the flesh may communicate with angels, and men freed from the flesh may sit among archangels. While the freed spirit of a mortal may pause to win and to earn its own, or may stop to instruct and uplift others needing counsel, yet it is forbidden to tarry long or to cease its upward flight.'

I did not understand him, but some instinctive fear drew me yet nearer the Master, who, seeing this, hastened to say:

'Though you are mine, my other self and dearest charge, yet must I leave you, here and now. The law that is greater than I bids me ascend; but there, beyond the shining veil, you still look upon the Star, the symbol of your child. But have you not seen that it grows pale and faint? Even she, your child, must needs move on to higher living. She has no power to stay, nor you to follow. The fair flesh in which your sweet spirit dwells is the barrier between you and your child, your mate, and the loftier realms of being.

'Though I have greater freedom,' he continued, 'more power, wider range of action than you, my own, yet I am none the less within the law. Nothing but the instruction of other souls can justify the spirit in lingering upon inferior planes. No relation but that of master and pupil can be maintained between those of the flesh and those of the spirit. Though I have been granted the dear privilege of winning your love, and have been permitted to teach you the glorious and divine truth, yet are we still apart, and I must wait in patience upon the law, — the law that finally shall bring us to the same plane of being.'

He paused again, then slowly, and with the light gone from his face, continued:

'The law, not I, beloved, speaks. Your child, now reached the period of responsible womanhood, must enter the higher spheres of action; and I, even I, who love you as mortals do not dream of love, — I, who yearn with infinite tenderness, — must either leave you now or——'

'Or what?' I cried, wildly, interrupting him.

'Or take you with me.'

The white mists gathered such volumes of light that I was blinded. To light was also added sound, — so divine a harmony that my being thrilled and my soul seemed fainting with excess of emotion.

Bewildered and blinded, I reached out my hands to Zanoni.

The Master lifted me up. I could now bear the light and the music. His face was angelic. The Star trembled before us.

'You comprehend, beloved?' — and he drew me to himself. 'When the spirit is poised for higher flight it may not be retarded; but should there be another, quite ready and willing to go, it also shall be lifted up and set free from earthly bondage. It shall pass beyond the shadow-land above the earth and pierce this dazzling veil. It shall be borne upon the wings of an infinite love into the very holy of holies.'

The light faded: the Star paled as he spoke. Pallid and uncertain it hung against the shining wall. I looked into Zanoni's face, and in its sublime joy and exultation I read my yet unspoken answer.

His hand held mine, and that touch, light as new-fallen snow, blotted out remembrance of all other ties on earth or in heaven.

'The Star grows dim, beloved: the time draws near. For many years you have stood in the Porch of the Temple: are you ready to enter in, or shall I wait a little longer? Ah! you fear the ordeal; you are not quite ready for this transition!'

'And if I fear to take this step?' I asked the question slowly, each word coming with difficulty, the sense of coming loss having chilled me. From the Master's face the radiance had fled, but it was infinitely tender in the sudden sadness sweeping over it.

'Then you must remain, and I must leave you yet a little time,' he said. 'No; nor must you grieve, beloved, for these decrees of nature. Though the laws of our being may separate us for a few short years of time, remember still that life is but the shadow of reality; that death is mere transition, and that love is the Immortal. The divine law which revealed us to each other can separate us only to perfect the final

happy consummation. There is no death except to those who love not. It was these you saw in darkness, foiled, beaten, shadowed by their own ignorance. Love alone is the Immortal. It has wings, rising and dwelling in the light. Love is the light, the white light of wisdom that beats upon the throne of God.'

I could not answer him; my soul waited, for I saw he had not yet done.

'Then you must wait a little,' he repeated softly, 'until all desires of earth are done, all duties performed, all obligations fulfilled; but before we part I would have you know that, being mine, it lies beyond your power to lose my love. No future act of yours, no denial of my claim, no crime against love itself will turn my soul from you. Go where you will, do what you may, renounce my love, reject my counsel, forget my name, yet will I love you, live for you, wait for you; yet will I honor and trust you, and know that you are mine.'

For the moment his face was turned from me, and I felt as if the sun had been blotted

from the heavens. Then he rested his eyes once more upon me.

'After this hour,' he said, 'unless you elect to go with me, you shall see me no more in dreams; you shall return and live untroubled all your days. You shall return to earth, to your husband, and to long-neglected pleasure, and of all this nothing shall be left but the vague, sweet pictures as of some half-remembered dream.'

'And you?' I murmured; 'and you?'—a great fear gripped my throat.

The love in his face was unspeakable.

'I shall go my way unseen of you,' he answered; 'but, ever watching over you, I enter the appointed path, learning the law, and waiting in patient loneliness until my mate shall come to me—shall come and light my path with the glory of her presence. I go, to return no more until she calls me; until the hour when, freed from the flesh, we shall be united and forever bound in the unfoldment of love's eternal laws.'

'No, no,' I cried, and the fear and dumbness and terror fell from me: 'I have no place on earth, no other life or heart

to fill; my work is finished there; my soul can not turn back. Oh! Master, take me home.'

It was lover, prophet and god, who, turning and bending toward me, drew me by the magic of his glance within the sheltering circle of his mighty arm.

Raising in his own my hand toward heaven, he spoke, in tones that seemed to swell and reverberate among the unseen mountains of Paradise:

'So let it be, my own; and here and now before the listening hosts of heaven we may proclaim that glorious truth, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Here and now your full, free choice shall be recorded in the mighty book of life. To every call of even fancied duty my love had yielded, had waited in patience for release; but, once the bar is crossed, — when once you enter in, as I have done, and stand with me upon the Eternal shore, — then fade all lesser claims and you are mine, mine only, and mine — for all eternity.'"

Chapter XV.

AN INNUMERABLE COMPANY.

THE woman ceased speaking. Her face whitened suddenly. Trembling violently, and flinging out her arms with a gesture of complete surrender, she fell back heavily upon her pillow. A moment of stupefied silence followed. The struggle for professional composure was a failure. I looked at Fred; he too appeared dazed. Varien was weeping like a child. For nearly an hour this apparently dying woman, instantly restored to the full flush of health and happiness, had rapidly poured into our ears this fantastic and incomprehensible tale, this insane medley, which yet we three men drank in like credulous children; nor could I, by any effort of reason or power of the will, undo the impression of truth, nor stamp her story as the mere vagary of a foolish dream.

I looked at Alice Huntington, the pale, quiet watcher on the other side of the couch, and I wondered how this weird romance had affected her, for not once during its entire recital had she moved or spoken. There had been but one break in the pitying, incredulous expression of her face, and this a flash so brief that I afterwards doubted the evidence of my own sharp, professional eyes. This was when Mrs. Varien had made that touching apology to her husband, had referred to his misdirected life, and expressed her hope that he might yet find the happiness of which she had robbed him.

At this point her cousin had started, drawing back surprised; and then, for one brief, unguarded moment, I saw the secret of a life written upon a pale, fair face. Varien also, as if stunned to a remembrance of other things, moved quickly, uneasily, making involuntary confession to the truth she had uttered. The affectionate and compassionate look with which he had been regarding his wife, changing swiftly to one of deep remorse, passed on, resting for an instant

upon the woman who it was said once loved him.

This was all. Miss Huntington did not once glance at her cousin's husband, and that strange look passed from her face. Varien's eyes again rested upon his wife; but I had seen his hand, that had been resting upon the arm of his chair, grasp the bit of carved wood with a sudden, spasmodic energy.

Now that it was over, and the tale all told, we shook ourselves from our stupefied silence and began what Fred afterward remarked must have been a still more foolish exhibition of medical insufficiency in the eyes of the invisible but caustic Zanoni. We felt Mrs. Varien's pulse, took her temperature, and asked her questions: all the while haunted by the blundering diagnosis of the alleged English doctor in India.

"Now, Mrs. Varien," said Fred cheerily, in his best professional tone, "we must not allow this very wonderful dream to quite carry you out of the world. I admit that it was a most extraordinary dream, but still only a dream; and now, if we may trust this

wise Master, even that is done, and we are going to plan for recovery. A little exhausted, I see; but now, that it is all over, you will take this beef and wine,"—and my colleague, hastily preparing another draught, held it to the lady's lips.

Now, passive and gentle, though with a faint smile, Dian Varien accepted and drank the preparation.

At this her husband, who had not yet spoken, seemed to take courage, and regarded our practical and bustling professionalisms with renewed hopefulness. Bending over her, and clasping the hand held out to him, he murmured anxiously:

"Well, Dian, dear, you have come back to stay. The tale is done; my own wife has come back. You are not going to dream again, nor to sail away into space with this angelic, dreamland lover." And he smiled sadly.

Unheeding the question, nor seeming to see him, the woman spoke; a strange, unearthly smile lighting her pallid face.

"It is now quite time to go. See, it is nearly one o'clock: Zanoni can wait but

the hour, and I promised him — for — all — e t e r n i t y."

The last words came slowly, in a dull monotone; then, raising herself suddenly and sitting upright, the woman slowly turned, fixing her eyes upon the window, as if expecting someone from out the darkness and silence of night.

Mentally execrating our stupidity in leaving the clock in sight, I glanced at it, and was surprised to see that it had stopped sharp at midnight.

"My dear Mrs. Varien," I said, directing her attention to the clock; "See, it is but twelve o'clock, and ——"

"The clock stopped when Zanoni ceased speaking. It will go when I hear his voice again." Still the same absent tone, the same fixed stare and unnatural smile. I shuddered, and I saw that Fred looked very grave.

"Dian, dear, do try to throw off the effects of this dream, — this cruel, torturing dream." It was Varien who spoke, his voice husky with grief. "Come back; be my own wife, my sweetheart, once again." And the poor

fellow, in sheer desperation, tried to fix her attention upon himself.

"Poor Frank," she murmured, but quite to herself: "He will grieve, but he will be happier in time. He may even find the one who must now be waiting for him. Yes; this is wisest, best. It is right. There," — she spoke suddenly in a loud voice, — "did you not hear it? It is coming. It is coming. Do you not see it? Ah! how it shines! — how it beats! — what music! — what music! — and the light! Oh! the light! The light! And the faces! Look! See! There is the innumerable company! Oh, the faces! — but, there! that one! that one! my little one! my darling! and who is with her, that other one? 'Tis he, at last! O my Zanoni! — my soul! I am coming!"

The last words ended in almost a scream. The light fled from the wide-open eyes; the brilliant flush of excitement was overswept by a horrible pallor; a gurgle was heard in the throat, and — the head of a dead woman fell back heavily upon the pillow.

The clock struck One, yet both of the hands were fixed at the figure XII.

Destiny

By Florence Huntley in 1888

There swung one day in the fair June sky
A silver mist,
A cloud king, gleamed his scepter high
By sunlight kis't.

In lonely pride sailed he from place to place
Uncertain, dim,
Till Hope, afar in the azure mist,
Uprose to him.

A dew-drop cloud, sunbright and sweet,
First smiled, then wept.
To her, on windy wings and fleet,
He madly swept.

Speeding swift, they two, in love's embrace,
Athwart the sky
Met, melted, mingled in the deeps of space,
One cloud for aye.

A Postscript.

SINCE the publication of this little volume I have received so many letters, and have been asked so many questions on certain points, that it seems mere justice to establish a better understanding between the reader and the author. Since the book claims to have been written from authority, there must have been no intention to puzzle or mislead, or to trip the earnest mind with occult stumbling blocks. Chief among these inquiries—some in a troubled spirit, others lightly satirical—is that of the "cruel separation" of Dian Varien from such a "model husband", and questioning the virtue of a philosophy that "permits any master or soul mate to steal a wife from an earthly legal husband."

In reply, I need only say that, for some strange reason, good people are not exempt from suffering; that knowledge of truth has ever been attained by the children of men through great tribulation; and that through

vicarious sacrifice Christ held up to a blind world the divine ideal of the brotherhood of man.

In this case, is it not rather the laying bare of *unseen causes* of sorrow that confuses the reader's ideal of justice?

In speaking of "cruel separation", to whom should we refer—Zanoni and his mate, Dian Varien and her husband, or Alice Huntington and Frank Varien, the man who, in youth (perhaps from fickle fancy), had discarded the woman who loved him so loyally, for the young cousin who might have mistaken her fancy of seventeen for true love? These cruelties are the common experiences in every-day life. Why lay particular stress upon the ruined life of Varien, when three other equally valuable ones were overshadowed and denied earthly happiness for twenty years? Which most deserve pity, the two who died, or the twain left to repair the early mistake, and who were so fitted to enjoy the congenial and beautiful alliance which is shadowed from all the chain of circumstances?

That Zanoni and Dian, her husband and cousin, or those to whom they were bound,

suffered, matters not so much, since it was the inevitable result of transgression, and through wider knowledge, finally working out the order and harmony for which each had so long patiently borne that "cheated life". Was not the final release from false relations worth all the sorrow, and may not their recorded experience stand as a warning and a promise for the great future?

Mere goodness does not exculpate the ignorant offender against civil or social or physical law, any more than it does the ignorant transgressor against moral and spiritual law. Good people frequently die of pneumonia and broken hearts, because they do not know, or refuse to live within, the physical and spiritual laws. Knowledge of truth is born of pain, and the path to justice is sanctified by human blood and tears.

That Frank Varien was weary of the bondage he confesses and he says: "I abandoned home, country, profession, friends—for what? Yet duty, pity and the memory of other days continued to bind me."

When his eyes cross the death-bed of his wife, and rest upon her lovely cousin with

"deep remorse", it is not difficult to see what may soon follow, in the ordinary and conventional routine of "good society".

Nor was Dian Varien "stolen" from her husband. It was not until the Masters saw her rapidly approaching death from hopeless grief that they interfered, and, through a noble desire to demonstrate a universal law, *prolonged* her life for sixteen years. Neither did Zanoni commit suicide. At the moment Dian was slipping from earth, her lover was also nearing the gates of physical death. His hopeless love and weariness of life had brought him down to death, and it was only these conditions that occasioned the Master's "call", after "three years of silence", for only Zanoni could save her life.

She was restored to life that the "long-sought demonstration" might be accomplished. Zanoni was simply permitted a natural, happy transition from a world of sorrow to one of joy. True, he received a warning of his own approaching death, from the spiritual realm, but that is so common a thing in our every-day world and in history that it should not excite resentment. Nor was there an im-

propriety in the English Chaplain's prayer, nor in the Orthodox belief that he had been "called of God to higher planes of activity."

In this particular story it is the laying bare of generally *unseen causes* that confuses the reader's idea of justice. It is merely an unfamiliarity with the divine yet relentless law of Karma—the law which proclaims, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap".

A word to such as have asked: "What of those already happily married? Shall they be separated hereafter to find some spiritual affinity?"

To these I answer: Such as live within the law upon earth need no teaching—their own perfect happiness is the answer to this question; and as to their future state, I need only add, that which is bound upon earth shall be bound in heaven, and that which is loosed upon earth shall be loosed in heaven.

The next and most remarkable construction placed upon this philosophy is that which would ally it to "free love", as the term is commonly understood. As far as the east is from the west, so is the noble doctrine of the Masters who teach it, from that hideous

mockery of love which now and then establishes itself among the viciously inclined.

"If your philosophy be true, what are all these mismated people to do? Shall each one, ignoring his present marriage, go searching in the spirit world for an alleged soul mate?"

To this I need only reply, Ignorance of the law leads always to its violation, and violation of the law from any cause imposes *penalties* in the form of *duties*, which must be performed before liberty is possible. False earthly marriages are violations of the law, and the penalties for such violations are the *duties* which flow from that relation. These duties *must be fulfilled before liberty comes.*

No love is "free" until it has atoned for past errors, and has suffered all that ignorance has caused it to inflict upon others, whether this penalty be wrought out in one life or in a thousand.

Millions of mismated men and women are living out their error in honorable silence. There is no license in this philosophy. Divorce is a last expedient. True, these mismated ones may be unhappy, yet they preserve to the world the image of the ideal. They suffer nothing of the despair of such

as, ignoring sacred obligations, despise established law, and live in vulgar promiscuity or in secret disloyalty to the marriage vow.

Neither a man nor a woman is freed from the laws of honor and chastity, whether they be unhappy, mismated or alone

The vain, willful and selfish who err only increase their penalties, and feed upon Dead Sea fruit.

The confusion of this present state of society, and the causes which underlie the chaos of human affairs and marital incompatibility, are little understood at this present time; yet shall the light of truth shine upon unborn generations, and bring them into harmony with the higher laws of human love.

This is the philosophy of Love, not Lust. It declares for a perfect union, yet recognizes all barriers. It points to ideal marriage, but forbids the overthrow of such as are honorably established. It promises happiness, but not through disloyalty. It speaks for time, yet rather for eternity. To the young, free, hopeful, it says, "Take heed". To those in bondage, it murmurs "Patience", and to such as have seen the Perfect Way, it becomes a

revelation of wisdom and glory, which no earthly sorrow may overshadow or destroy.

I am gratified rather than annoyed that these questions have been asked. They prove that many minds are working out these sublime problems of life and death and love, yet they leave me to regret that I have cast so faint a shadow of the splendid reality.

——Florence Huntley.

(*Reprinted from the Third Edition.*)

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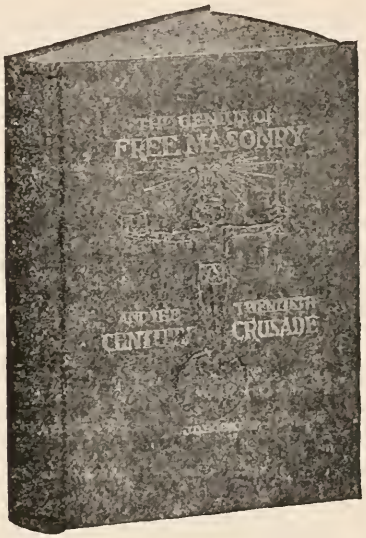

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